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General Assembly
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Monday, 3 December 2001, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo ..... (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 42 (*continued*)

The situation in the Middle East

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are witnessing the deterioration of the situation in the Middle East with the most serious crisis experienced in the area in recent years. The spiral of violence and State terrorism, with the death of innocent civilians and the desperation of millions of Palestinians and Arabs, systematically destroy the hope that serious and constructive dialogue can open the long path to peace.

Occupied Arab Palestinian, Syrian and Lebanese territories continue to be occupied in flagrant violation of a broad range of General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. The inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to the creation of its own independent and sovereign State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, continues to be denied. Illegal Israeli colonialist settlement continues in occupied Arab territories, whose legitimate inhabitants are expelled from their lands. Grave violations of international humanitarian law and human rights of the Palestinian people and other Arab peoples under Israeli occupation are committed daily. Thousands of dead and tens of thousands wounded by the use of heavy and high-technology weapons testify to the fact that not even the right to life is respected.

We awakened this morning to terrible images of missile attacks by the Israeli army. Extrajudicial killings, selective assassinations, torture and brutal repression, including the destruction of homes, are carried out before our very eyes.

Economic pressure against the most vulnerable population is strengthened through embargoes, closures, taxes, the withholding of financial transfers and the flagrant daily violation of the agreements between the parties. To the physical and psychological blows one must add the flagrant violations of the right to food, education, health and development of millions of people in this part of the world. The coarse manipulation by the media that control information globally habitually conceals and distorts the facts and deceives public opinion, serving in a disciplined way the political interests of their Governments.

Innocent Israeli civilians, unfortunately, are also victims of the spiral of violence and terror caused by the policy of their Government. Cuba emphatically condemns the terrorist suicide bombings that took place over the weekend in Jerusalem and Haifa. There are many forces within Israel that are opposed to the continuation of the war and that share with neighbouring peoples the desire for peaceful coexistence and mutual respect.

There will not be a just and lasting peace if Israel does not denounce its occupation policy. There will be no peace if the legitimate interests of all the peoples of the region are not taken into consideration. There will be no peace if the Security Council does not implement

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its many resolutions or if it does not use its broad powers. There will be no peace if one of the permanent members of the Council continues to use the veto to impede the implementation of those resolutions.

There also will be no real progress in the global campaign against terrorism if those who claim to be the leaders of this campaign protect in the Security Council the exercise of State terrorism against the Palestinian and Arab peoples under occupation. Security Council reform that will eliminate, or at least temporarily curb, use of the veto and put an end to the double standard typical of that organ is urgent.

The recent history of the Middle East and of Palestine might have been different had the United States not vetoed 36 draft Security Council resolutions since 1972. It is a tragic paradox that a permanent member of the Security Council and the world super-Power should also be the Power that pays for and supplies the aeroplanes, helicopters and state-of-the-art missiles that are used to murder innocent civilians with impunity in that tumultuous region.

It is necessary to put an end to Israel's usurpation and occupation of the Palestinian territories in the West Bank and Gaza, of the Syrian Golan and of areas in southern Lebanon that are under Israeli army control. It is necessary to find a lasting and satisfactory solution for the millions of refugees and displaced persons. All the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly should be fully implemented, particularly Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978). It is urgent to deploy an international force to protect Palestinian civilians. It is essential that the United Nations play a genuine, effective role that would guarantee impartiality in the negotiations.

A solution to the Palestinian problem remains the core of a settlement of the Middle East conflict. There can be no peace or security unless the just demands of the Palestinian are met and unless the usurped Syrian and Lebanese territories are returned.

Nobody denies Israel's right to exist, and the occupying Power must not deny the right of its neighbours to live on their own lands and to engage in peaceful development in independent, sovereign, prosperous nations and States. The Cuban delegation supports the urgent convening of the Conference of High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949.

The community of nations bears a major responsibility and must face it decisively and courageously no matter how difficult it may be. In that effort, the international community can always count on the constructive contribution and the traditional firm support and solidarity of Cuba.

Mr. Pamir (Turkey): I would like at the outset to express, on behalf of my Government and of the Turkish nation, our profound sympathy and deepest condolences to the bereaved families of the victims of the outrageous terrorist attacks which took place last weekend at Jerusalem and Haifa. This morning's news from the region clearly confirms once again the risks involved in a vicious circle of violence.

Turkey has already aligned itself with the statements made on 29 and 30 November on behalf of the European Union on the agenda items entitled "The question of Palestine" and "The situation in the Middle East". That being said, I would like to further address those agenda items and to expound our views on both.

Only four days ago, we commemorated the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, when the Secretary-General reminded us of the growing mistrust and animosity between the Israelis and the Palestinians, which has sadly come to the fore as a result of recurrent violence. The fact is that the escalation of violence has greatly undermined all the noble efforts directed at building bridges of reconciliation and feelings of partnership between those two ancient peoples. Nobody can be proud of the current standstill, which has been inflicted by violence, robbing the region and its peoples of the assurance of healthy prospects for a secure and enlightened future.

More than six months has passed since the Sharm el-Sheikh Fact-Finding Committee — in whose work the former President of my country, His Excellency Mr. Süleyman Demirel, participated actively — issued its ground-breaking report. And each precious day that has elapsed and every ominous development that has taken place since then has vindicated the basic wisdom and understanding that shaped the Mitchell report. Today, the implementation of the recommendations contained in that report remains the only viable path towards breaking the circle of violence at long last and reviving the Middle East peace process.

Therefore, and as a corollary, without waiting for any specified period and irrespective of the reason for it, the fighting should stop. Each side should do its utmost to prevent any such occurrence, show restraint and limit its reactions so that the process we all long for — founded on the art of rebuilding confidence and trust instead of cowardice and mistrust — between Israel and the Palestinian Authority can start in earnest. In the same vein, and at the same time, terrorism in all its forms should be renounced unequivocally.

It is high time indeed that all of us fully understood that searching for degrees of sense and reason in acts of terrorism is futile, not to mention self-defeating, anti-humanitarian and downright dangerous. We would like to hope that the international coalition against terrorism forged in the aftermath of the horrendous attacks of 11 September will encourage both parties to seek lasting peace. It was in that spirit that we welcomed the agreement between President Arafat and Foreign Minister Peres in late September, which was unfortunately marred once again by the continuation of wanton violence.

We really cannot lose our hope for peace. None who have the prosperity and well-being of future generations in mind and in sight can allow themselves to lose their hope for peace. That is why we have been reminding the parties of their responsibility before the flow of history to curb and then eradicate violence and to de-escalate tension on the ground, so that they can meet each other's fundamental needs: security in word and reality for Israel, and viable political prospects for the Palestinians. Their request to gain their inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination and to a State of their own, is a just cause.

It is only through the resumption of peace talks that the international community can expect to see a lasting and comprehensive agreement that will enable Israel and Palestine to live side by side within mutually recognized borders. The realistic and well-balanced Mitchell report and the Tenet plan, with its clearly defined parameters, constitute the pillars of a genuine road map that will lead the region to peace to be achieved on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace.

While Turkey supports all international efforts directed at finding a solution to this problem, we deem the active involvement of the United States to be necessary in this sphere as well. We welcome heartily the commitment of the United States to a just peace in the Middle East, as expressed by President Bush and Secretary of State Powell on 10 and 19 November respectively. It is worthwhile to repeat the prospect put forward by the Secretary of State, as it describes a positive vision. He foresees the establishment of a State of Palestine which will live side by side with its neighbour Israel in peace, security and dignity. That State should assure the security of Israel and recognize its legitimacy.

We very much hope that this will be the point of departure for enduring peace, and a station at which to leave behind once and for all the tragedy of the past, and from which to depart towards a secure and enlightened future for the Middle East. It is in that spirit that we call upon the parties to show leadership of historic proportions and to exercise maximum restraint in order not to let themselves be derailed from the track towards this noble vision. Turkey, for its part, stands ready to contribute to these efforts and to continue to act as a facilitator.

While the Palestinian-Israeli conflict lies at the core of the Middle East problem, we must not lose sight of the other tracks. We are concerned that the process on the Syrian track has come to a standstill. We hope that peace talks on this track will soon resume. In this context, we welcomed the Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon in accordance with Security Council resolution 425 (1978) and consider it to be a crucial step in the right direction.

Mr. Al-Hussein (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): The question of the Middle East, the core of which is the question of Palestine, remains an important item on this Assembly's agenda, especially as the discussion of this item is taking place at a time when the Palestinian people is a target of acts of military aggression by the Israeli occupation authorities and of their use of unjustified force. This will only result in more bloodshed, throw the Middle East peace process into an even deeper crisis and cause further deterioration in the situation between the two parties, as well as in the entire region.

How can we be convinced that peace is the ultimate goal when Israel continues to impose blockades against the Palestinian people, to implement assassination schemes, to make incursions into the territories under the control of the Palestinian National

Authority and to build settlements, all of which are contrary to the principle of land for peace. Israel denies the rights of the Palestinians; yet, justice is the basis for peace, and peace is the framework for security.

Jordan firmly believes that the resolution of this conflict will not be possible through the use of force or by coercive or security measures. In this regard, we strongly condemn the targeting and killing of civilian populations on both sides. Indeed, there is no alternative but the return of the two parties to the negotiating table as equal partners seeking a settlement that would ensure their legitimate rights and their future. This will not be achieved unless reciprocal, parallel steps are taken on the basis of the accords and obligations concluded between the Palestinian and Israeli sides. First and foremost, the use of the Israeli military machine against the Palestinian people must end.

Taking these steps would constitute the right approach towards implementing the Mitchell commission's recommendations, which aim primarily at creating conditions conducive to a return to the negotiating table. Starting the final status negotiations would symbolize the urgent priority to achieve the primary objective of the peace process — namely, the fulfilment of national Palestinian rights, the establishment of a viable Palestinian State on Palestinian territory and the provision of security for Israel.

Jordan's concept of peace, as we have repeatedly stated in this Assembly, is that it must be just, lasting and comprehensive. This concept has been underlined by the international parties directly involved in the Middle East question. Our firm commitment to peace within this concept is based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). These two resolutions, as well as other relevant General Assembly resolutions, have not yet been implemented, despite the passage of several decades since their adoption.

At this point, we must once again emphasize the United Nations role and responsibility towards the question of the Middle East, the peace process and the need for the revival of this role. We further underscore the responsibility to support the efforts and endeavours to push the peace process forward towards its desired objectives. The United Nations, its Charter, resolutions and provisions are the basic norms for the resolution of disputes, and they govern the basic rule of international law.

The peace process has been based on recognized and firm principles, primarily the principle of land for peace. We cannot understand how justice can be fulfilled without full Israeli withdrawal from all Palestinian and other Arab occupied territories.

Jordan welcomes the announcement by President George W. Bush regarding sponsoring a United States solution that would ensure the existence of two States, including a Palestinian State on occupied Palestinian territory on the basis of the relevant Security Council resolutions. This would complete the international consensus on the basic requirement for achieving peace in the region.

It is our hope that the United States efforts will continue, with the support of the European Union countries, Russia and the international community as a whole. We also welcome the thrust of United States Secretary of State Colin Powell's statement on the need to end Israeli occupation, in line with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

Comprehensive peace must include Israel's withdrawal from occupied Syrian territory back to the 4 June 1967 lines and a complete withdrawal from the remaining occupied Lebanese territory on the basis of the relevant Security Council resolutions.

There is an international juridical consensus that East Jerusalem is part of the West Bank territory that was occupied in 1967. As such, it is subject to Security Council resolutions. Indeed, the Council has treated the City of Jerusalem as a special case since the beginning of the Israeli occupation, and all along it has adopted a series of resolutions that reject annexation by Israel of East Jerusalem. Those resolutions also reject all Israeli measures and legislation aimed at changing the character of the Holy City and the works undertaken in order to transform its demographic and topographic character.

Therefore, all the announcements made repeatedly by Israeli officials regarding Jerusalem as the eternal capital of Israel are contrary to all foundations of the peace process. East Jerusalem is an occupied territory under international resolutions, and it is the spiritual centre of the three divine religions. Also, we would like to see Jerusalem as an ideal, noble symbol of peace and cooperation. This will not be

achieved unless and until Israel withdraws from the territories occupied in 1967, including East Jerusalem, and a return of those territories to their legitimate owners, with Jerusalem as the capital of the Palestinian State.

The question of the Palestinian refugees who were forced out of their homeland in 1947, 1948 and 1967, and those who were deported over the many and long years of occupation is still waiting for a just solution under international law and United Nations resolutions, especially General Assembly resolution 194 (III), which called for the rights of the Palestinian people to return or to receive compensation for their suffering during years of deportation, exile and occupation. The solution of the question of refugees remains one of the most important cornerstones of peace and security in the region.

In closing, my delegation would like to affirm categorically our full support for a comprehensive peace and the need to focus our efforts on stopping the deterioration of conditions in the occupied Arab territories.

Mr. Chaudhary (Nepal): The situation in the Middle East is still volatile. Numerous lives have been lost since September 2000. Both sides — the Palestinians and the Israelis — have suffered a great deal due to the continuing violence in the region, which, unfortunately, has not seen peace for the last five decades, from the time of the United Nations partition plan in 1947.

The establishment of a just, durable and comprehensive peace in the Middle East will be possible only with the full implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). Nepal has always placed emphasis on the full implementation of those resolutions. We believe that both sides need to exercise the utmost restraint in order to create an environment conducive to giving peace a chance.

Nepal is deeply concerned at the outbreak of violence in the Middle East, which has resulted in the loss of precious human lives and in the destruction of property. We very much look forward to seeing the adoption of some practical measures before serious negotiations are brought back on track with a view to restoring lasting peace.

In this regard, we believe that implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Mitchell committee, released last April, and the Tenet ceasefire plan can, even under the present circumstances, play a very positive role in reducing tensions, which are running so high.

We believe that the international community's attention should be drawn to the need to ensure the exercise of the inalienable right of the Palestinians to self-determination, with the creation of an independent state. The recent announcement by the United States Government of its intention to become more closely involved in efforts to bring about peace in the Middle East has also encouraged many of us who would like to see a lasting peace established in the region sooner rather than later.

The violent acts in the region of the Middle East must cease. Only a return to negotiations involving all of the parties concerned can lead to the promotion of peace and prosperity in the Middle East. The need of the hour is urgently to reverse the situation and to try to build on the achievements recorded so far with a view to establishing stability in the region.

The President: I have just received a request to suspend the meeting for half an hour for consultations. If there is no objection, I will suspend the meeting now.

The meeting was suspended at 10.35 a.m. and resumed at 11.40 a.m.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolutions A/56/L.23 and A/56/L.24.

We turn first to draft resolution A/56/L.23, entitled "Jerusalem".

Before proceeding to take action on the draft resolution, I should like to announce that, since its introduction, Pakistan has become a sponsor of draft resolution A/56/L.23.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burundi, Cambodia, Canada, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic,

Ecuador, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guyana, Honduras, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, Nauru

Abstaining:

Australia, Haiti, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nicaragua, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, United States of America, Vanuatu

Draft resolution A/56/L.23 was adopted by 130 votes to 2, with 10 abstentions (resolution 56/31).

[Subsequently, the delegations of Afghanistan, Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Gabon, Guinea, Haiti, Hungary, Lithuania, Malawi, New Zealand the Republic of Moldova and South Africa informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

The President: Draft resolution A/56/L.24 is entitled "The Syrian Golan".

Before proceeding to take action on the draft resolution, I should like to announce that, since its introduction, Pakistan has become a sponsor of draft resolution A/56/L.24.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Bolivia, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Ghana, Guyana, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Tuvalu, United States of America

Abstaining:

Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Benin, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Haiti, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Monaco, Nauru, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tonga, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Yugoslavia

Draft resolution A/56/L.24 was adopted by 90 votes to 5, with 54 abstentions (resolution 56/32).

[Subsequently, the delegations of Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Guinea, Malawi, and South Africa informed the

Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour; the delegations of Hungary and the Republic of Moldova had intended to abstain.]

The President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of vote on the resolution just adopted. May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Estremé (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Argentine Republic has voted in favour of draft resolution A/56/L.24, on the Syrian Golan, because we consider that its essential aspect is linked to the unlawfulness of the acquisition of territories by force. Article 2, paragraph 4, of the Charter of the United Nations prohibits the use or threat of use of force against the territorial integrity of a State. This constitutes an imperative norm of international law.

At the same time, I would like to clarify the position of the delegation of Argentina with respect to operative paragraph 6 of the draft resolution. My country's vote does not necessarily prejudge the reference to the line contained in this paragraph.

Mr. De Ruyt (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to take the floor to explain the vote by the European Union on the draft resolution on the Syrian Golan.

The European Union is firmly committed to a just, sustainable and comprehensive settlement of the Middle East situation on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and also on the principles of the Madrid Conference, particularly that of land for peace, and the Oslo accords.

It is with great concern that we view the deterioration of the situation in the Middle East and the escalation of violence to a level unknown for years. We call upon the Israeli and Palestinian sides immediately to return, without preconditions, to the negotiating table on the basis of the recommendations of the Mitchell report and the Tenet plan, which must be implemented fully and without delay.

The European Union believes that a comprehensive, just and sustainable peace in the region will not be complete without the Israeli-Syrian and Israeli-Lebanese tracks. These negotiations must be undertaken as soon as possible in order to reach an agreement in conformity with the same principles.

We think that this draft resolution on the Syrian Golan contains geographic references which could prejudge the outcome of bilateral negotiations. For that reason, as in previous years, the European Union has abstained from the vote.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote after the vote.

We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 42.

Agenda item 41 (*continued*)

Question of Palestine

Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (A/56/35)

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/642)

Draft resolutions (A/56/L.19, A/56/L.20, A/56/L.21, A/56/L.22)

The President: Members will recall that the General Assembly held a debate on agenda item 41 at its 69th and 70th plenary meetings, on 29 and 30 November 2001.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolutions A/56/L.19, A/56/L.20, A/56/L.21 and A/56/L.22, as orally revised.

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their votes before the voting. May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seat.

Mr. Lancry (Israel) (*spoke in French*): I am grateful for the opportunity to express my views on the voting on the draft resolutions on the question of Palestine.

Normally, this kind of voting hardly inspires us to offer an explanation, given how accustomed Israel has become to the unfailing ritual whereby it invariably finds itself, year after year, in splendid yet scarcely enviable isolation. Today, however, following the surge of Palestinian terrorism and the carnage of the last 48 hours in Jerusalem and Haifa, we are compelled to

break with the traditional silent objection adopted by my delegation in previous years.

Indeed, we must tell the General Assembly today that, in the face of the Palestinian terrorist furor, we cannot remain indifferent. We cannot accept an endorsement — based on a reflex conditioned by the shackles of automatic majorities and the burden of prejudice forged in the arbitrary nature of alliances and inalienable alignments — of Palestinian terrorist attacks that corrupt any possibility of resuming negotiations.

Peace, according to the Palestinians, is a matter of strategic choice. And yet, their strategy for peace is heavily dependent on terrorist tactics, the devastating effects of which obscure the visibility and credibility of the peace process. Unless it considers Palestinian terrorism in its most abject and perverse form to be a kind of national resistance — and thus ultimately acceptable — the General Assembly must make a moral choice today and distance itself from certain Palestinian terrorist practices, the barbarism of which has no equal but in the suicidal and fanatical impulse that underlies it.

I urgently appeal here and now to my colleagues in many delegations to disengage themselves from draft resolutions that would endow Palestinian terrorism with international legitimacy, in flagrant contradiction to acts that no national aspiration, no matter how noble, can justify. I appeal here to those of my colleagues who are people of conscience. I appeal to colleagues whose alignment is not inevitably equivalent to blind partisanship. I appeal to colleagues who, in recent weeks and months, have courageously asserted their rejection of terrorism in all its forms and who should be able to demonstrate their independence, here and now, as they face a decisive and crucial choice.

In the voting on issues connected to the question of Palestine, Israel usually entertains hopes of rather modest support. The importance of the voting today lies in the quality of the message to be sent by the General Assembly to the Palestinians. That is up to the General Assembly to determine in its soul and conscience.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): As in previous years, the Russian Federation will vote in favour of the draft resolution on the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, contained in draft resolution A/56/L.22.

At the same time, I wish to report that, yesterday, the Foreign Ministry of the Russian Federation issued a statement in which it strongly condemned the bloody terrorist act carried out in Jerusalem on 1 December and described that act as cruel provocation aimed at undermining attempts to find a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian confrontation. We express our condolences to the families of the victims of that monstrous crime and once again call most categorically on the leadership of the Palestinian Authority to take effective measures to curb the extremists.

We are convinced that it is now more necessary than ever to intensify efforts to implement the Mitchell and Tenet plans for the normalization of the situation and a resumption of the negotiating process. Accommodating steps must be taken by the Palestinians and Israelis to break the senseless cycle of violence, in which every act of bloodshed, regardless of who may perpetrate it, only leads to an escalation of the crisis and claims more victims.

The Russian Federation, along with its American co-sponsors, the European Union, the United Nations and other parties, will continue to work for the easing of tensions and for returning the situation to the political track.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolutions A/56/L.19, A/56/L.20, A/56/L.21 and A/56/L.22, as orally revised.

We turn first to draft resolution A/56/L.19, entitled "Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People". I should like to announce that, since the introduction of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors: Brunei Darussalam, Namibia, Niger, Togo and Zimbabwe.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa

Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Tuvalu, United States of America

Abstaining:

Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Monaco, Nauru, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tonga, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Vanuatu, Yugoslavia

Draft resolution A/56/L.19 was adopted by 106 votes to 5, with 48 abstentions (resolution 56/33).

[Subsequently the delegations of Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon and South Africa informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

The President: We turn next to draft resolution A/56/L.20, entitled "Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat". I should like to announce that, since the introduction of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors: Brunei Darussalam, Namibia, the Niger and Zimbabwe.

A record vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Tuvalu, United States of America

Abstaining:

Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Monaco, Nauru, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tonga,

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Vanuatu, Yugoslavia

Draft resolution A/56/L.20 was adopted by 107 votes to 5, with 47 abstentions (resolution 56/34).

[Subsequently, the delegations of Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon and South Africa informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

The President: We turn next to draft resolution A/56/L.21, entitled "Special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat".

Before proceeding to take action on the draft resolution, I should like to announce that since its introduction, the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/56/L.21: Brunei Darussalam, Namibia, the Niger and Zimbabwe.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), United States of America

Abstaining:

Nauru, Tuvalu, Vanuatu

Draft resolution A/56/L.21 was adopted by 153 votes to 4, with 3 abstentions (resolution 56/35).

[Subsequently, the delegations of Côte d'Ivoire and Gabon informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/56/L.22, entitled "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine", as orally revised.

Before proceeding to take action on the draft resolution, I should like to announce that since its publication, the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/56/L.22: Brunei Darussalam, Namibia, the Niger, Togo and Zimbabwe.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Ghana, Greece, Grenada,

Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, New Zealand, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, Tuvalu, United States of America

Abstaining:

Australia, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Latvia, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Poland, Romania, Rwanda, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Draft resolution A/56/L.22 was adopted by 131 votes to 6, with 20 abstentions (resolution 56/36).

[Subsequently, the delegations of Côte d'Ivoire and Gabon informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

The President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to make statements in explanation of vote after the voting. May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Ovia (Papua New Guinea): Papua New Guinea's position on the question of the right to self-determination is well known in the Assembly, and I do not need to repeat it. It has been reflected in Papua New Guinea's affirmative vote on draft resolutions on this subject in the past. However, Papua New Guinea has abstained in the voting this time.

We believe that peace cannot be achieved through continued violence, such as that occurring in the last several months in the Middle East region. As a Melanesian country and, for that matter, a Pacific island country, we believe that peace can be achieved only through negotiations and discussions with our adversaries to resolve differences and bring about the common peace we all desire.

Papua New Guinea continues to believe that Israel must recognize the right of the Palestinian people to exercise their right to self-determination and, as a result, to have a State. We also believe that Israel has a right to coexist in a safe and secure environment with its neighbours, and the State of Israel must therefore be assured of its right to coexist within safe and secure boundaries.

Papua New Guinea also believes in the purposes of the United Nations as outlined in its Charter. Unless the United Nations is taking action under Chapter VII of the Charter, it must be seen as impartial at all times when dealing with parties to a conflict. It must not be seen as taking a position that could be interpreted to be pre-empting the outcome of any negotiations.

Papua New Guinea believes in the sanctity of life, whether Israeli or Palestinian. It is wrong to commit suicide or to use one's own body as a weapon of destruction. Extrajudicial killings also have no place in a civil society that is founded on the rule of law. By the same token, we are concerned about the implementation of the rule of law, and about governance generally, inside Palestinian-controlled areas. Peaceful coexistence is an uncertain outcome when there are elements in conflict that do not recognize the right of Israel to exist within secure borders.

In our view, these matters are not properly reflected in the draft resolution contained in document A/55/L.22. We have therefore abstained in the voting on the draft resolution.

Mr. Duval (Canada): Canada stresses the need for a peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Indeed, there is no way to resolve the dispute but through diplomatic channels. Violence must end, and negotiation must resume. Both Palestinians and

Israelis continue to suffer, and both must take the necessary steps to end the suffering.

Canada abstained in the voting on draft resolution A/56/L.22 because the text does not sufficiently recognize the violence inflicted against civilians on both sides of the conflict. The horrific events of the past 48 hours demonstrate the tragic scale of civilian suffering. We urge the parties to take the necessary steps to end these senseless cycles of violence.

Mr. Cockx (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to explain the vote of the European Union on the draft resolutions entitled "Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People" and "Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat".

The European Union is convinced that the framework of the peace process, as it was constructed through negotiations and agreements between the parties, represents the only reasonable hope of ending a conflict that, if it continues, can only aggravate the sufferings of the peoples involved. This process has produced a gain that must be preserved, and, more importantly, brought to fruition.

In spite of our deep concern at the ever-deteriorating situation in the Middle East, we continue to call on Israelis and Palestinians to return without preconditions to the path of negotiation on the basis of the recommendations of the Mitchell report and the Tenet plan.

The European Union regrets that the mandates of the two United Nations bodies on the question of Palestine do not sufficiently reflect the spirit of the peace process, which, necessarily and urgently, must be revived. For that reason, the European Union, as in the past, abstained in the voting on the two relevant resolutions.

Mr. Macedo (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation voted in favour of draft resolution A/56/L.22 because we feel that the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine is one of the indispensable elements in the settlement of the conflict in the Middle East.

Nonetheless, we would like to repeat the following observations in relation to the content of the draft resolution's operative paragraph 3.

Mexico observes that one of the postulates of the peace process in the Middle East is the return of land in exchange for peace. The formula of land for peace has demonstrated its usefulness on the path towards the resolution of this specific conflict. However, it would be hazardous to convert it into a universal legal principle and a norm applicable to all conflicts.

Behind that formula is the general principle of international law that military conquest does not confer territorial rights. We all recognize the fundamental norm that the acquisition of territories by means of force is inadmissible. As a corollary to this universal principle, it should be concluded that the totality of any territory occupied in an armed conflict should be returned unconditionally to its legitimate owners. That is why the delegation of Mexico repeats that even though we recognize the political value of that formula, we consider that it is not a very rigorous step to elevate it to the status of a general principle of international law.

Mexico would like once again to appeal for greater precision in the language used to describe a political understanding that is not, nor can be, a universal legal principle. In fact, in the eighth preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/56/L.24, on the Syrian Golan, which the Assembly also adopted at this meeting, reference is made to "the formula of land for peace". That is an expression that we feel much more correctly describes that understanding. The word "formula" is what we would prefer to see in all draft resolutions related to this issue. For Mexico, this is a matter of legal purity of terminology and does not have to do with the substance of the political understanding.

Mr. Harrison (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom fully associates itself with the statement in the debate and the explanation of vote made by the representatives of Belgium on behalf of the European Union.

The United Kingdom also fully supports the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine. My Government believes that to find such a peaceful settlement, both sides in the conflict must make difficult decisions in the cause of peace. Both sides have responsibilities and obligations. Both sides must make courageous compromises.

Draft resolution A/56/L.22, on which we have just voted, is clear about the responsibilities on the Israeli side; we support what the resolution says about

them. But the resolution does not reflect our belief that the Palestinian side must also implement its obligations in particular by making every effort to prevent violence against Israeli civilians, including suicide bomb attacks. The horrific attacks over the weekend lend urgency and weight to this requirement.

More generally, at a time of concern throughout the United Nations about the protection of civilians, the General Assembly has missed an opportunity to register concern in this specific case with balanced language on violence against civilians. For these reasons, the United Kingdom abstained in today's voting on the draft resolution entitled "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine" (A/56/L.22).

Mr. van den Berg (Netherlands): The Netherlands fully supports the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine. For that to come about, both sides will have to face difficult and far-reaching choices. The Netherlands feels that the text of draft resolution A/56/L.22 does not reflect in an even-handed way the obligations and responsibilities of both parties. More specifically, the Netherlands deplores that the current text does not refer to the killing and wounding of civilians, including by means of suicide bomb attacks such as we have witnessed this weekend. For this reason, the Netherlands abstained in the voting on this draft resolution.

Mr. Blazey (Australia): Australia abstained in the voting on draft resolution A/56/L.22, even though we strongly believe that there must be a peaceful settlement of the differences which separate the Palestinian and Israeli peoples. Australia has great sympathy for the losses suffered by both Palestinians and Israelis, and while we acknowledge that the Palestinian civilian population has suffered significantly, we regret that the resolution has not adequately recognized the losses on both sides.

Australia continues to reject the use of violence. We believe there can be no military solution to the present conflict. We urge both sides to seek an early resumption of negotiations for peace based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace.

Mr. Hughes (New Zealand): New Zealand voted in favour of draft resolution A/56/L.22 today, but not without considerable reservations. We would greatly have wished to have seen a more balanced text, particularly in the sixteenth preambular paragraph, which might have acknowledged the high number of deaths and injuries among civilians on both the Palestinian and the Israeli sides, not least in view of the horrific suicide attacks in Haifa and Jerusalem over this last weekend, which New Zealand strongly condemns. We urge the Israeli and Palestinian sides to return urgently and without preconditions to the peace process on the basis of the Mitchell report and the Tenet plan and in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

Mr. Kolby (Norway): Norway continues to reject the use of violence, no least when directed against civilians. The horrific acts over the weekend have reinforced the need for the international community to speak out against indiscriminate acts of violence directed against innocent civilians.

The conflict in the Middle East can never be resolved by the use of violence, and a heavy responsibility lies on both parties to prevent the violence from spinning out of control. The situation demands firm leadership and control, and we were reminded of the need for that by the horrific acts this weekend.

In our view, the need to fully protect all civilians against violent attacks was not sufficiently reflected in the resolution on the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine. The responsibilities on the Israeli side are reflected in the resolution, but the same cannot be said for the responsibilities on the Palestinian side. Norway therefore abstained in the voting.

Ms. Løj (Denmark): Denmark strongly supports the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine. The draft resolution on this issue contained in document A/56/L.22, just adopted, contains many useful elements to be pursued in order to reach this goal. They are fully supported by Denmark.

In order to fully reflect the situation in the region, not least after the tragic events in recent days, Denmark supported the inclusion in the text of wording regarding the prevention of all indiscriminate acts of terror and violence directed at civilians — Palestinians as well as Israelis. Since this was not reflected in the text, Denmark abstained in the voting on the draft resolution contained in document A/56/L.22.

Mr. Loizaga (Paraguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): As regards draft resolution A/56/L.22, "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine", the delegation

of Paraguay abstained in the voting, because we would have liked to see in the resolution an appeal in relation to the most recent events that we have witnessed in Israel and in the Palestinian zone. We feel that it is necessary to indicate to both parties the need to provide guarantees of security to the civilian population. That is why we urge both parties to arrive at a peaceful and lasting solution as soon as possible.

Mr. Schumacher (Germany): Belgium, as Presidency of the European Union, has voiced our position as regards the peace process in the Middle East, and we fully associate ourselves with the statement made by our Belgian colleague. However, Germany found it necessary, together with other European Union partners, to abstain in the voting on draft resolution A/56/L.22, "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine". We urge both parties to end the senseless cycle of violence. The urgency and necessity of this, in our opinion, is not reflected in a balanced and even-handed manner in this resolution with regard to the parties concerned. The terrifying attacks on the weekend lent urgency to this requirement. The conflict in the Middle East cannot be resolved by military means or indiscriminate acts of violence against civilians on both sides.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote after the voting.

I now call on the observer of Palestine.

Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): The observer delegation of Palestine is pleased with the outcome of voting on the draft resolution discussed today. We are deeply grateful to the General Assembly for this clear stance towards the Holy City of Jerusalem and rejection of the actions taken by Israel. No delegation voted against that resolution, except for Israel and, unfortunately, Nauru, for reasons that we cannot understand or know.

The results of the voting show the refusal of the international community to accept Israel's position on Jerusalem; a clear position regarding the State of Palestine, whose establishment is a sine qua non for achieving overall peace in the region; and a clear position of appreciation for the role of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the Division for Palestinian Rights and the United Nations special information programme.

Our deep thanks go to the Chairman of the aforementioned Committee, Ambassador Papa Louis Fall, the members of the Bureau and the other members of the Committee, as well as all those who supported and voted in favour of these important resolutions today, especially the sponsors.

The Palestinian leadership has condemned the attacks that took place in Israel over the past few days. The Palestinian leadership expressed its outrage over these terrorist attacks not only because of the human losses they caused on the Israeli side but also because of the damage they inflict on our national cause, on the efforts to resume the peace talks and, last but not least, on the very unity of the Palestinian people.

Yesterday, the Palestinian leadership adopted a series of extraordinary decisions in this regard, including declaring a temporary state of emergency and making it illegal for any Palestinian faction not to comply with a ceasefire.

Today, Israeli helicopter gunships fired many missiles in the area of the offices of Chairman Yasser Arafat and attacked and destroyed two non-military helicopters belonging to the Palestinian Authority. Yesterday, the Israeli occupation forces shot to death five Palestinian martyrs. The day before, they killed two children after sweeping into the outskirts of the city of Jenin. Before that, the occupation forces were continually killing Palestinians, including by extrajudicial executions and planting a time bomb in a civilian neighbourhood, resulting in the deaths of five Palestinian schoolchildren. I wish to note that it was an army that undertook these attacks, and not an unofficial group or even Israeli settlers. Israel, the occupying Power, continues to violate the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949 with deliberate killings, war crimes and State-sponsored terrorism.

The General Assembly has discussed in depth the question of international terrorism, which dominated the Assembly's agenda this year. During that debate, we expressed our position clearly as part of the international consensus. At the same time, we warned against imposing an illegitimate agenda on the international agenda, and most specifically the Israeli agenda.

Israel continues its attempts to impose its own particular agenda. This time it is waging a fight, through its friends in the United States of America, to

take control of the battle against terrorism, to have it work in its favour by linking the campaign of the United States and the international community in Afghanistan to what Israel is doing, trying to project itself as if it were in the same fight. As far as we know, the United States is not an occupying Power in Afghanistan. It has never been that. It has not denied any people its right to self-determination for over 35 years. It did not wage a protracted, oppressive, bloody war against that people. What Israel is doing is lowly; it will not improve its status as an occupying Power, but it will do great damage to the international campaign against terrorism and to the international coalition against terrorism.

Yes, there have been terrorist attacks carried out inside Israel, but this phenomenon started recently, only a few years ago. This is an outcome, and not the reason for the current situation. The reason is the uprooting of the Palestinian people from their homeland and their denial of their own State for more than 50 years. The reason is the Israeli occupation of those Palestinians who remained in Palestine after more than 35 years. The reason is colonialist settlement, taking control of land and water resources, bringing Israeli settlers to the occupied territories and isolating our people in their towns and villages. The reason is suppression, deportation, detentions and assassinations throughout so many years. The reason is war crimes and State-sponsored terrorism.

Despite all that, there is no justification for directing terror against civilians. It does not justify terrorism despite all the pain and suffering. But this explains it and places it in a clear context. More importantly, it prevents Israel from using that as a pretext for completing its efforts to destroy peace in the region and perhaps to demolish the Palestinian Authority and restore the occupation of all Palestinian territory.

The retreat by a limited number of friendly States from voting in favour of the resolution on the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine was a step in the wrong direction. It is not a position against terrorism, because we all stand united against terrorism. It is a position, deliberate or not, of making the fight against terrorism the single most important task in the region. We cannot accept this line of argument. The main task is to put an end to the occupation and to build peace, and in the course of doing that, to resist oppression, violence and terrorism. That position provides a convenient pretext for the Government of Israel to maintain its brutal, bloody campaign against our people, to continue circumventing the implementation of the Mitchell recommendations and, more importantly, to avoid ending its occupation of the Palestinian territory, which is the core issue. We regret that this position is not in line with the statements made by some of those countries and their lip service to establishing a Palestinian State.

However, more important than all that is what I said at the beginning. The strong and clear international position once again sends the message — primarily to Israel, the occupying Power, and to all peoples of the region, including the Palestinian people — that the international community continues to favour the observance of international law, on the side of right and justice, and to favour peace-building efforts in the Middle East region, including the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

I wish to thank all Members. We hope that we will meet again next year under better conditions than those prevailing today.

Mr. Lancry (Israel) (*spoke in French*): I wish to thank the representatives of many delegations for their expressions of condolence and their condemnation and denunciation of Palestinian terrorism and for their appeals for the resumption of negotiations. We have noted with satisfaction that our appeal in the course of our explanation of vote before the vote seems to have been heeded by a number of delegations and that a certain message, be it muffled, appears to have been transmitted today to the Palestinian side. Fourteen months of violence and Palestinian terrorism have done nothing to advance their cause. The results of the vote today testify to that.

Even within an organization in which, at times, a certain majority forms a kind of wall, we saw today some cracks in that wall: openings towards a fairer, more independent vote. Some other delegations too have noted the glaring inadequacies of draft resolution A/56/L.22, entitled "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine". In their statements in explanation of vote, the Permanent Representatives of those delegations worked to bridge the deepening gulf the Palestinian delegation is digging with that draft resolution.

In our view, this terrorism should be understood in its terrorist dimension: to describe it in terms of a cycle of violence is incomplete. We are convinced that the international community is duty-bound to denounce Palestinian terrorist practices without ambiguity, without understatement, without lexical subtleties. It is by recalling the true nature of Palestinian terrorism, unmasking it and denouncing it for what it is that we can truly help the Palestinians become committed to dialogue, coexistence and peace.

The Palestinians mention Israel's "excessive use of force" and "extrajudicial killings". Perhaps one day the Palestinians can explain to us how the Palestinians, in their commitment to suicide terrorism and to mowing down Israelis by the dozen, are not engaging in the excessive use of force. Can our Palestinian partners tell us whether, with their implacable suicide attacks, they are departing from certain legal norms? In the Jerusalem and Haifa attacks there was no moderate use of force or, unfortunately, any act of justice. Justice will be restored to the Palestinian and Israeli peoples when peace is established through dialogue, through education for peace, through an end to hatred and incitement, and through absolute and total renunciation of the weapon of terrorism. Here I recall the 9 September 1993 letter from Yasser Arafat, dated four days before the signing of the Oslo accord, in which Chairman Arafat, in order to attain his strategic political ends, undertook to renounce all forms of terrorism. It is to those words of that letter that we should return.

In conclusion, I associate myself with the hope expressed by the Permanent Observer of Palestine, His Excellency Mr. Nasser Al-Kidwa, and in my turn express the hope that next year we can return here under much better circumstances.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): As Chairman of the Arab Group for this month and as one of the sponsors of the draft resolutions adopted today, Egypt would like — without detailing political positions that are well known to all — to explain its position on draft resolution A/56/L.22. Many delegations proposed amendments to that text to reflect the incidents of the past two days and the terrorist acts that took place on Saturday and Sunday, which were condemned by Egypt and other members of the international community, including the Palestinian Authority.

As one of the sponsors of the draft resolution, we would have been prepared to accept the amendment proposed by some countries; we too proposed a small amendment to make the text more balanced and to reflect the situation, not only that of last weekend, but also that of this morning, when, as we have seen on television, excessive force was used in Gaza. Regrettably and significantly, our proposal was not accepted: the sponsors of draft resolution A/56/L.22 agreed that reference should be made to terrorist acts and to the need to put an end to terrorist acts because they are convinced that such acts are illegal and harmful to peace and should be condemned. Regrettably, the countries that had proposed the earlier amendment did not accept our proposed reference to restricting the illegal use of force. That raises grave concern.

Mr. Mekdad (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation is grateful to all delegations that voted in favour of draft resolution A/56/L.24, entitled "The Syrian Golan". The Assembly's adoption of that draft resolution means a great deal to our people and to all those struggling for liberation and for an end to foreign occupation.

The resolution sends a clear and unambiguous message that is beyond doubt: that occupation is unacceptable and has been rejected; that the building of settlements and the trampling of the rights of peoples are unacceptable and have been utterly rejected.

The General Assembly has sent a very clear message to Israel about the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force. This is something that concerns all the world's peoples; all countries want an end to this occupation. The resolution further expresses the Assembly's deep concern at the fact that Israel has not withdrawn from the Syrian Golan, which has been under occupation since 1967, contrary to the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. The Assembly is thus clearly announcing a policy that should be understood by the party that occupies the territories of others. The Assembly has also declared that the Israeli decision of 14 December 1981 to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the occupied Syrian Golan is null and void and has no validity whatsoever. It determines once more that Israel's continued occupation of the Syrian Golan and its de facto annexation constitute a stumbling block in the way of achieving a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the region.

The voice of the international community should be heard. The occupying Power should listen to this voice and should understand that the current situation cannot be resolved without its withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories and the restoration of the legitimate, inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. Any attempts to distract the attention of the international community from the real reason behind all the problems that the Middle East is facing as a result of the Israeli occupation are doomed. Peace and security are integral; one cannot be achieved without the other.

The President: I call on the observer of Palestine, who wishes to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): I must acknowledge that I do not understand the procedural aspect that was followed after the vote. This is an issue that could be looked into at a later stage.

I must also confess that I do not understand what the representative of Israel said regarding the results of the vote, except that the traditional position of Israel is one that does not respect the absolute majority of Assembly members. Israel has rejected all United Nations resolutions — those of the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and so forth. Not a single resolution has been adopted in favour of the point of view of Israel, and for the simple reason that it is illegitimate. It runs contrary to the provisions of international law and those of the United Nations Charter.

The draft resolutions that were adopted today fall into this context. It is my hope that the representative of Israel — that the Government of Israel — will understand the pronouncements of the international community as they are, rather than what they wish them to be.

As a representative of a people under long-term occupation, I feel extreme pain. I sincerely feel pain when the representative of Israel lectures us about morality as to what should or should not be; he is simply representing an occupying force. On the same moral basis, could we possibly expect him to condemn foreign occupation? Could we hear him condemn State-sponsored terrorism? Could we hear him condemn extrajudicial executions? And could he condemn the continued serious violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention? How about war crimes? Settler colonialism? Bringing colonialists and settlers to our land? The acquisition of one third of Gaza's territory to give to 4,000 settlers and the expulsion of more than 1 million Palestinians living below the line of poverty?

Israel's immoral and illegitimate practices have caused hatred, anger and rejection of Israel's colonialism. We do not condone such practices. The representative of Israel should not try to give the impression that what he represents is a moral position. The Israeli practices run contrary to all morals and ethics, and putting an end to such practices is a sine qua non for peace. Do not push the Palestinian people even further. Do not try to drag the region into a total war. What you have practised against our people is more than enough. It is enough.

Please stop giving us lectures on morality and ethics. Stop lecturing the General Assembly and other organs of the United Nations, because this will lead to nothing. It is unfair and unjust, and it will only lead to more tension and animosity. Look at your practices, and try to end them in favour of peace in the region.

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 41.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.

United Nations A/56/PV.73

General Assembly
Fifty-sixth session

Official Records

73rd plenary meeting
Monday, 3 December 2001, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo ..... (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 48

Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa

Report of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa (A/56/45)

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/371)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.28)

The President: Before inviting representatives of Member States to speak on this important agenda item, I wish to make several observations on the urgent need for the international community to support the African States in their efforts to achieve durable peace and sustainable development. Chapter VII of the 2000 Millennium Declaration, while recognizing the special needs of Africa, pledged support for the consolidation of democracy in Africa and assistance for Africans in their struggle for lasting peace, poverty eradication and sustainable development. This commitment was seen as central to the vital task of bringing Africa into the mainstream of global development.

Currently, some 17 conflicts are ongoing in Africa. Almost half of African countries are directly or indirectly affected by conflict. While many African countries showed slow but steady economic growth through the 1990s, conflict-ridden States suffered negative growth. The tragedy of AIDS blights the lives of more than 23 million Africans today. Some 13 million Africans have already died and 10 million African children have been orphaned by AIDS. We must stop this trend and reverse it. In a world of accelerated globalization, the common prosperity of all mankind should be our objective.

In this regard, we greatly welcome the New Partnership for Africa's Development, an African-initiated and African-led framework for action to promote sustainable development, adopted by the African leaders last July. The New Partnership for Africa's Development draws its strength from the determination of Africans to overcome underdevelopment and marginalization. In order to guarantee the successful implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, the international community should do its part by providing, inter alia, increased private and public capital flows to Africa, market access expansion and debt reduction. I urge the United Nations system to provide the maximum support for African States and to help foster productive and mutually beneficial partnerships between Africa and the international community and civil society, including the private sector.

The General Assembly will continue to play a major role in assessing and monitoring progress in Africa and make necessary recommendations, mainly through the work of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working

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Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa, as well as through the preparatory process for the final review and appraisal of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

I now give the floor to the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.28.

Mr. Yussuf (United Republic of Tanzania): I am pleased to introduce on behalf of the African Group the draft resolution entitled "Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa".

The United Nations has always made its support for Africa's development a priority. Indeed, over the years, several initiatives have been unveiled by the United Nations on Africa. Central to these initiatives have been efforts to ensure coordination and coherence. In this respect, the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa constituted a major development in the way the United Nations should respond to Africa's development concerns. The report reflected acute awareness of the nexus between peace and development and made recommendations for a comprehensive and integrated approach to conflict prevention, poverty eradication and development.

Monitoring the implementation of those recommendations, as well as assessing progress made, is an important exercise to enable the United Nations to achieve its objectives regarding Africa's development. The draft resolution, in this regard, seeks to reiterate the crucial role of the General Assembly in this exercise. The forthcoming review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa and, more significantly, the adoption by African leaders in July of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, which provides a comprehensive and coordinated framework for Africa's development, have implications for the further implementation and monitoring of the Secretary-General's recommendations.

The draft resolution, while stressing the need for keeping the recommendations high on the agenda of the United Nations system and of its Member States, endorses the recommendations entitled "Suggestions for further actions and measures" contained in paragraphs 35 to 56 of chapter III of the report of the Working Group. Key among these recommendations is the decision to consider further measures for implementing and monitoring initiatives on Africa, including the ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council of 2001 on the basis of the New Partnership for Africa's Development. The draft resolution also requests the Secretary-General to submit to the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly a comprehensive report on implementation and on concrete measures required to ensure a well-coordinated and integrated approach to the full and early implementation of those recommendations.

More importantly, the draft resolution calls for the strengthening of political will to ensure the effective implementation of the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report, including the two thematic areas where progress remains slow.

Finally, the Secretary-General is requested to designate the already established interdepartmental/inter-agency task force as the permanent focal point within the Secretariat mandated to monitor the implementation of the recommendations contained in his report. The draft resolution also requests that the interdepartmental/inter-agency task force be strengthened with the necessary human and financial resources to effectively discharge its mandate. It further requests the task force to provide annually to all Member States updated matrices indicating the current status of implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General.

Having said that, there is a change to the draft resolution. Operative paragraph 9 should read as follows:

> "*Requests* that the Secretary-General designate the already established interdepartmental/inter-agency task force as the permanent focal point within the Secretariat mandated to monitor the implementation of the recommendations contained in his report, and requests also that the task force be strengthened with the necessary human, managerial and administrative resources to effectively carry out this task;"

Since I have the floor, allow me also to read out the statement of the United Republic of Tanzania.

The General Assembly and its main bodies and other international organizations have recently focused much of their attention on discussing issues of conflict resolution, sustained growth and sustainable development in Africa.

Due to the seriousness of the matter, in July 2001 the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council on the role of the United Nations system in supporting the efforts of African countries to achieve sustainable development emphasized the need for the international community to resolve on an urgent basis the African crisis in the areas of peace, development and health. Last year's Millennium Summit also recognized the appalling situation in Africa and called for remedial action by all. It is in this light that we believe the root causes of Africa's underdevelopment and conflicts have come to be known and understood. The challenge before us is therefore to implement the various agreed measures aimed at addressing Africa's problems.

The report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/56/371 has identified a number of initiatives in the areas of conflict resolution, sustainable development and poverty eradication. While it is noted that progress is likely to be achieved in implementing the recommendations of the Secretary-General, there exist a number of problems that still need to be resolved.

The problems of Africa can be resolved through concerted efforts and partnership between the international community and conflict-ridden African countries. Our delegation therefore emphasizes the need for a sustained tripartite effort by African countries, the United Nations system and the donor community. This partnership should aim at supporting initiatives of Africa in the economic, social and security areas.

Internal conflicts continue to hamper efforts towards achieving economic and social development in some African countries. It is important that the international community increase its support for the mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution of the African Union and its subregional organizations. These mechanisms play a significant role in conflict prevention and resolution in Africa. Africa needs resources to enable the mechanisms to prepare better for the tasks of conflict prevention and resolution. Here we wish to emphasize that efforts being undertaken by African countries in this field should receive the increased support of the United Nations, the Security Council in particular, as well as that of other international bodies in general in the maintenance of peace and security.

Africa therefore supports the efforts being made to resolve conflicts in the Great Lakes region, in Angola, in Sierra Leone, in Somalia and in other African countries where such conflicts persist.

There is a direct link between conflict and the incidence of refugees and internally displaced persons. It is estimated that more than 7 million people are refugees or displaced persons in Africa. In our various interventions, we have stressed the need for the international community to increase its support for the refugees, as well as for the refugee-hosting nations. Moreover, a durable solution to the refugee problem entails the resolution of conflicts in the country of origin followed by repatriation and resettlement of refugees.

There are a number of measures being undertaken to assist Africa in its endeavour to achieve sustainable development. Critical steps have to be taken to address inadequate official development assistance (ODA) and foreign direct investment (FDI) flows and the debt burden confronting a number of African countries. However, we wish to reiterate that more needs to be done in these areas. Specifically, we wish to emphasize the need for our development partners to increase ODA flows from the current low levels to the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product.

The provision of ODA should be carried out in tandem with an increase in investments. Though many African countries have undertaken structural adjustment programmes and economic reforms, the flow of FDI remains dismal. There is a need for investors to respond positively to the efforts Africa is making at creating an enabling environment for FDI and economic growth.

A solution to the debt burden which many African countries continue to face has to be found on an urgent basis. Debt repayment drains valuable resources from the rehabilitation and construction of essential development infrastructure and programmes aimed at poverty eradication. We welcome the various debt relief measures taken by the donor community, particularly the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative. My country is

particularly grateful to the donor community for enabling it to join the three other countries that have reached the completion point. However, there is a need to relax further the conditionalities attached to HIPC so as to enable more countries to qualify for HIPC funding. We further appeal to donors to increase contributions to the HIPC Trust Fund so as to cater to increased demands for resources in the HIPC countries.

There is a need to address these issues of financial resources in a more comprehensive fashion so that a long-term solution for Africa is found. In this context, we expect that the special concerns of African countries will be taken into account at the International Conference on Financing for Development, scheduled to he held in Monterrey, Mexico, early next year.

For there to be accelerated development in Africa, the international community should direct its support to the area of technology transfer and education. The widening technological gap and the deepening digital divide between African countries and developed countries have been major impediments to development. We therefore call on the international community to strengthen efforts to transfer technology to Africa on concessional and grant terms, including information and environmentally sound technologies.

Africa recognizes that it is primarily responsible for its own development. Thus, our leaders recently adopted the New Partnership for Africa's Development based on a common vision and a firm and shared conviction that they have a pressing duty to eradicate poverty and to place African countries on a path of sustainable development. Africa realizes that there is much that the continent can do and should commit itself to do. In this regard, Africa agreed to strengthen democracy, entrench a human rights culture, end existing conflicts and prevent new ones, deal with corruption and be accountable for all actions.

In conclusion, Africa recognizes that its efforts alone, however determined, will not be sufficient to bring about the envisaged development. To this end, Africa expects its efforts, particularly through the New Partnership for Africa's Development, will be complemented by actions by and support from the international community in the true spirit of partnership.

The President: Before proceeding further, I should like to inform members that, in a letter dated 8 November 2001 addressed to me, the Permanent Representative of Iceland to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Western European and other States for the month of November, requests that the General Assembly hear in plenary meeting a statement by the observer of the Holy See on agenda item 48, "Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa".

In view of the importance attached to the issue under discussion, it is proposed that the General Assembly should take a decision on that request.

May I take it that there is no objection to the proposal to hear the observer of the Holy See on this agenda item?

It was so decided.

Mr. Belaoura (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): Two years ago, Algeria, as the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), took the initiative to request the President of the General Assembly to establish the Working Group to follow up implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa, published in April 1998. Our initiative was then based on two separate but complementary concerns. It was a matter, on one hand, of enabling the General Assembly, as the principal deliberative and decision-making body of the United Nations, to fully play its role in ensuring follow-up of the implementation of the recommendations contained in that important report of the Secretary-General. On the other hand, it was also a matter of giving greater visibility to the issues raised in that document concerning a continent where problems of peace and development are established priorities for our Organization.

The Working Group then held a series of meetings throughout the fifty-fourth and fifty-fifth sessions, during which it focused on certain themes chosen for each session. At the fifty-fifth session the Group focused particularly on problems of education and on conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building. The consideration of these questions followed the adoption of the Millennium Declaration, in which the special situation of Africa was given priority attention by the world's leaders. Thus, that consideration acquired special significance.

Today we are called on to carry out the first assessment of the Group's work and the recommendations contained in its report. Before contributing to this collective consideration, I would like, on behalf of the Algerian delegation, to express our heartfelt thanks to the President of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, Mr. Harri Holkeri, for his personal commitment at all stages of the Working Group's work and for the commendable efforts he constantly made for the smooth functioning and success of the sessions of the Group. We also thank the Permanent Representatives of Spain and Pakistan, Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, for having enthusiastically and skilfully conducted the work of the Working Group. We also thank Mr. Ibrahim Gambari and his secretariat team for their useful and highly appreciated contribution to the work of the Group.

The analysis and recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report are still fully relevant three years later, not only because they identified the synergy between peace and development, but also because they identified in a very forthright way the internal, external, old and current causes of persistent conflict in Africa and the need for active, substantive and regular African and international commitment to return the continent to the path of peace and growth. We will continue to recall the historical and political dimension of the African crisis and to stress our collective responsibility and common moral duty to do everything possible to meet the many challenges confronting the African peoples.

The two themes tackled in the Working Group during the fifty-fifth session — education, and conflict prevention and peace-building — provided us with the opportunity to pinpoint the structural difficulties confronting development efforts in the continent and, in certain instances, the impossibility of remedying some things because of prevailing conditions.

On the subject of education, certainly progress has been made in certain areas, and the international community has provided regular assistance to many African countries in this strategic area. Nevertheless, Africa continues to see the lowest school enrolment rates in the world and the greatest gender disparity in terms of access to education. The goal of access to education for all by 2015, agreed at the international level, is not feasible, according to the report, because of many factors, including the paucity of financial resources, the lack of educational equipment, the spread of AIDS and its devastation and the persistence of conflicts in some parts of Africa.

On the second theme, we note today with hope that the situation of many conflict areas in Africa is, on the whole, evolving positively, thanks to efforts that led to the conclusion of peace agreements between the parties, with various forms of support provided by the international community. The satisfactory deployment of the three most recent peacekeeping operations — in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone and between Ethiopia and Eritrea — has made it possible, among other things, to start to implement the agreements concluded, with a view to a lasting, peaceful settlement to the sort of crises that, not so long ago, led to devastating wars in the African continent. That shows the necessary complementarity between actions of African countries themselves and those of partners to resolve conflicts and maintain peace. A similar effort should be made in the area of post-conflict peace-building, to which the international community should give greater attention.

In addition to these specific themes and proposals formulated by the Working Group in order to provide responses to these major challenges, one constant element emerged from the many discussions and hearings held by the Group. This could be summed up as follows.

Despite progress made in recent years, Africa has not managed to put a definitive end to the scourges that undermine it, such as poverty, underdevelopment, disease and instability. Otherwise, how can we explain that Africa continues to have the largest number of people living below the poverty line, that its contribution to world trade has been stagnating over the last two decades at around the 2 per cent level, that the AIDS pandemic is ravaging Africa, where it takes 90 per cent of its victims annually? How else can it be explained that the African countries continue to languish under the weight of external debt, which consumes a substantial portion of their revenues and diverts precious resources that could have been used for development projects, and that the digital divide continues to expand, increasingly leaving Africa at the margin of information technologies and the new economy?

Ministerial and summit meetings, interactive debates, round tables, high-level segments and specialized conferences — Africa has been, in the past

10 years, on the agenda of many international and regional meetings that have taken up the question of peace and development in the continent. The United Nations and development partners have also launched a series of initiatives for Africa. The situation of the African continent has been analysed in detail, its causes have been clearly identified and remedies have been identified and proposed. But the essential thing is that effective changes on the ground have not met the legitimate expectations of the African countries and peoples.

Despite this rather discouraging picture, the African peoples and leaders have consistently reaffirmed their unequivocal determination to assume their responsibilities and to meet the many challenges that they confront. The gradual establishment, starting this year, of the new African Union is part of this qualitative leap that Africa has decided to make. In so doing, Africans, for whom the new African Union opens up real prospects and new challenges, are determined to do everything possible to make the Union not just a copy of the OAU, but rather an opportunity to seize and a tool for development, solidarity, cooperation and continent-wide integration.

This is the point of the New African Initiative that was adopted at the Lusaka Summit, which later became the New Partnership for Africa's Development. Conceived as a comprehensive framework for all of Africa's efforts and the efforts of its partners, this New Partnership, elaborated by the Africans themselves, is a unique synthesis of Africa's commitment, vision and ambition in terms of peace, security and economic and social development. The emphasis placed on universally shared values, such as democracy, human rights and good governance, attests to the level of commitment of Africans to promote societies where respect for liberties, the need for transparency and the primacy of law are the rule.

That said, the peoples of Africa expect the international community to play its part: we need a further meaningful leap forward in the form of political and moral commitment commensurate with the challenges. And we need effective contributions in the form of technical assistance, financing and investment to make a success of this important enterprise.

We anticipate that, with our partners in the United Nations and in other forums, we shall look for the best ways and means to promote this African initiative, the best ways to mobilize the necessary financial resources and to gain the interest of other important private sector and civil society actors apart from the United Nations and the United Nations system. The world cannot enter the new millennium with an Africa that is lagging behind; where there is constant conflict and instability; where disease, in particular HIV/AIDS, is causing such devastation; where poverty and destitution are the daily lot of millions of men and women; and where debt is cancelling out any real growth. Without coherent action that will make a difference in those areas, we will continue to endure alibis and futile promises.

In its report (A/56/45), the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa recommends that the Assembly suspend the activities of the Group during the fifty-sixth session and that the Interdepartmental/Inter-Agency Task Force be strengthened in order to enable it to follow up the recommendations contained in the reports of the Secretary-General. Algeria participated in the drafting and adoption of that important recommendation, and we believe that this pause in the work of the Group should be used to enable the Secretary-General to focus in 2002 on a final review of UN-NADAF and on follow-up to the Ministerial Declaration adopted by the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council on Africa.

Finally, I reaffirm our support for the strengthening of the Task Force, headed by Mr. Ibrahim Gambari, Under-Secretary-General and Adviser on Africa, whose skill and experience were particularly appreciated by the Working Group throughout its work. We hope that the work of the Working Group on the causes of conflict in Africa and the promise held out by the new world context and by the upcoming international meetings can all be used effectively to implement the recommendations of the Secretary-General and to encourage the launching, through the New Partnership for Africa's Development, of a genuine partnership for peace and development in Africa.

Mr. Bishnoi (India): We thank the Secretary-General for document A/56/371, in which he reports on the progress of the implementation of the recommendations contained in his April 1998 report (A/52/871) on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in

Africa. We also thank the Permanent Representatives of Spain and of Pakistan for their work as co-Vice-Chairmen of the Assembly's Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa, and would like to place on record our appreciation for the report (A/56/45) of the Group.

It has always been our conviction that Africa knows its own problems better than anybody else and that its understanding of the situation cannot be replaced by that of others. Africa also knows the solutions to its problems. These have been articulated clearly by it over the years, most recently in the New African Initiative, now renamed as the New Partnership for Africa's Development, which was adopted in July 2001. What Africa requires, and what is incumbent on the international community, is that the international community support it in the solutions which it has identified.

Chapter II of the Secretary-General's report deals with the interventions of the United Nations system in peacekeeping, peacemaking and peace-building. We support such interventions so long as they support Africa's own initiatives. We are aware that there is, at times, a temptation to micromanage the affairs of others. This eliminates the real causes of neither conflict nor arrested development, and it fails to satisfy both donors and recipients. It should be recognized that there is no one standard formula which can be applied to situations that have different economic, social and cultural complexities. Assistance should be untied, not only with regard to the sources of goods and services but also with respect to advice.

Good governance is one of the two pillars identified in the Secretary-General's report for promoting peace and sustainable development in Africa. We ourselves attach great importance to good governance in the movement away from political, economic and social oppression, when it springs from within a society that is developing and when it is in harmony with local cultures and values. External intervention to promote good governance, however, produces good results only in exceptional cases. It nearly always results in a downgrading of the social welfare and economic growth agenda of the assistance package. It also has the paradoxical effect of reducing the capacity of recipient countries for policy-making and implementation.

Economic growth has led to peace and sustainable development in other parts of the world. It could in Africa as well. If there is one standard formula which we believe can be applied to situations with different economic, social and cultural complexities, it is that. It is also a formula with which Africa and all developing countries of the world can completely identify with.

Economic growth requires capital accumulation. But countries which find it difficult to meet the basic needs of their peoples cannot realistically hope to increase their domestic savings rates. The solution, we are told, lies in private capital flows. Experience, however, tells us that foreign direct investment follows economic growth rather than leading it. Nor can debt relief be a solution by itself. Even if all the countries in sub-Saharan Africa were brought under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative and were granted full and immediate relief of their official debt, the amount released would be less than half of their external financing requirements. The inescapable conclusion is that official development assistance, in the form of long-term development assistance, remains vital for the renewal of the continent.

The international community does not need to reinvent the wheel for Africa. The priority sectors have been identified in the New Partnership for Africa's Development. A focus on those priorities — infrastructure, health, education, agriculture and diversification of production and exports — is essential if Africa is to achieve the agreed international development goals.

India has always attached the highest priority to its cooperation with Africa. A principal instrument of our technical cooperation with Africa is the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme. About 20,000 foreign nominees, primarily from Africa, have received training in India in diverse fields including banking, foreign trade, hydrology and water resources, communications, electronics, satellite imaging, agriculture, small and medium enterprises, software, renewable energy sources and other areas. We provide a total of 1,350 training slots every year in some of our best educational institutions; of these, nearly 60 per cent are for nominees from African countries. India has always believed that the gains obtained by its pursuit of economic, scientific and technological self-reliance should be shared with its

developing country partners, particularly those in Africa.

India has also participated in each and every United Nations peacekeeping operation established in Africa, including some of the most difficult ones: in the Congo, Somalia, Angola, Sierra Leone and now the Democratic Republic of the Congo. That is proof of our commitment to peace in Africa. We also support all initiatives to strengthen African peacekeeping capacity, and we have contributed to this through bilateral cooperation programmes. Many African military officers attend professional courses in staff colleges and other training institutions in India, including in the recently established Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping in New Delhi.

Africa is the birthplace of humanity and the cradle of civilization. It has served humanity for centuries as a resource base. Its resources have contributed to the economic development of the rest of the world. Colonialism, however, kept Africa itself economically impoverished for centuries. Subsequently, shortcomings in the international trading and financial environment have not allowed the continent to realize its own potential.

There can be no doubt about the moral obligations of the international community. Globalization has created the opportunity for lifting millions out of poverty. It is now up to the international community to guide the globalization agenda so that its benefits are spread more equitably, and for the cause of economic growth, sustainable development and peace in Africa.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): In our statement on this issue last year, my delegation hailed the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa as a landmark in the way it showed the link between peace and development. This link was again echoed in many of the statements by the leaders of delegations during the recent general debate of the General Assembly. In fact, the tragic events of 11 September seemed to have reawakened extensive debate on the interlinkages between peace, security and development.

It was thus fitting that the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group this year devoted its time and attention to the issues of education, conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building.

South Africa believes that there is an inextricable link between peace, democracy and development. Therefore, in our view, the prevention of conflict within States requires that we work towards the establishment of solid institutions of democratic governance that protect the rule of law and promote fundamental human rights, including the right to development. The responsibility for achieving these goals rests primarily with States and their national governments. In Africa, we are beginning to make great strides in our efforts to achieve peace, democracy and development. These efforts are facilitated by the growing realization among African leaders that the continent's destiny can no longer rely on the goodwill of others and that development cannot take place without peace.

Through the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), African countries have resolved to enhance African institutions in support of actions to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts. Furthermore, Africans are resolved to enhance continental capacities in peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace enforcement, post-conflict peace-building and combating the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

While Africans are taking the lead in responding to the conflicts besetting the continent, it must also be made clear that our initiatives will require political, moral and material support from the international community. The United Nations is certainly well placed to coordinate and lead international efforts in this regard.

There is common agreement with the Working Group on the significance of education to ensure a balanced approach to the triangle of peace, democracy and development. My delegation, therefore, attaches great importance to the role of education in addressing the plight of Africa. We are thus in full agreement with the Working Group's assessment of the critical role of education in addressing the challenges faced by Africa. We also endorse the Working Group's determination of the wide range of issues in which education can make an important contribution, which includes dealing with the challenges of globalization and poverty eradication: development of technical, vocational and professional skills to respond to the knowledge-based economy and society; employability in a globalized world economy; contribution to science and technology; preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS; preventing and managing

conflicts; and promoting peace and sustainable development.

It is because of the all-encompassing impact of education, as recognized by the Working Group, that it has been highlighted as one of the priority areas of the New Partnership for Africa's Development. It is envisaged that human resource development through education will be the core ingredient in taking many of the initiatives in NEPAD forward. Africa will be looking at all levels of education on the continent, from primary to tertiary.

It is heartening to see the wide-ranging support already provided to the countries in Africa. These include efforts focused on promoting girls' education, technical and vocational education, the promotion of science education, and education for a culture of peace, human rights and democracy.

We still have a long way to go to reach the targets set for 2015, and the current enrolment rates for primary education, especially among girls, are not encouraging. However, we have to remain focused and committed in our efforts. There could hardly be a more noble partnership than that of sharing knowledge which will contribute to the social, economic and material uplifting of the individual and thereby the family, the community and society as a whole.

My delegation places a high priority on the role that technology, particularly information and communication technology, can play in the promotion of education in our country and in the rest of our continent. It opens vast new possibilities as it multiplies efforts. It substantially improves economies of scale in the education field and significantly enhances its reach through distance learning. The conclusions reached at the coordination segment of the Economic and Social Council in July on the role of information and communication technology, and the establishment of the ICT Task Force, are important in their promotion of technology transfer in support of development and, in particular, to enhance education.

But in view of the enormous challenges facing the continent, especially in post-conflict situations, and considering the important contribution to be made by education to conflict prevention, post-conflict peace-building and development, African countries need massive resources, from both domestic and international sources. Mobilization of resources through domestic measures and through official development assistance and trade will be of great significance.

However, the drain on resources caused by the continuing debt overhang, which seems to be worsening with the current international economic downturn, is untenable. It is difficult to explain how, even after the implementation of the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative, 10 African HIPCs will still be spending more on debt servicing than on primary education and health combined. We will have to address this indefensible situation through a new and in-depth evaluation of the debt sustainability definition and a reassessment of the growth projections that underpin the design of the enhanced HIPC debt initiative.

The report of the Ad Hoc Working Group certainly provides important benchmarks for the kind of cooperation that may be required to realize international support and my delegation fully concurs with the recommendations of the Group to the General Assembly. We also support the proposal that the activities of the Working Group be suspended for one year to allow the appropriate attention to be given to the review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s and the follow-up to the Ministerial Declaration adopted by the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council this July. My delegation further endorses the proposals to bolster the support structures in the Secretariat to ensure that this issue receives its due attention. It is therefore essential that the next session of the Working Group consider its work in the context of the new partnership framework recently adopted by African leaders, as has been proposed by the Working Group.

Mr. Kpotsra (Togo) (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly's annual consideration of the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa prompts us this year to consider the progress that has been achieved in implementing those recommendations in the two areas that have been chosen by the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa: education for durable peace and sustainable development, and conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building.

Before I continue, I wish to extend the congratulations of my delegation to the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session, Mr. Harri Holkeri, and especially to Ambassadors Shamshad Ahmad of Pakistan and Inocencio Arias of Spain, Vice-Chairmen of the Ad Hoc Working Group, for their leading role in conducting the Group's work this year.

The noteworthy contribution of the Secretary-General and, in particular, the excellent support given by Mr. Ibrahim Gambari, Under-Secretary-General and Adviser on Africa, in conducting the work and the drafting of the report under consideration also deserve everyone's appreciation.

At the Millennium Summit, the heads of State and Government made a commitment to guaranteeing education for all by the year 2015 and to eliminating gender disparities in education by 2005. It was in the light of those objectives that the Ad Hoc Working Group sought to assess the efforts made in the implementation of the recommendation in the Secretary-General's report concerning investment in human resources. In a very timely way, the Group also focused on the assets that education can bring to Africa in order to help it to confront today's challenges.

Having concluded its deliberations, the Ad Hoc Working Group notes with concern that, although the efforts made by the United Nations system, the African countries themselves and the international community are praiseworthy,

> "human resource capacity in many African countries remains weak and inadequate to respond to the challenges of the twenty-first century" (*A/56/45, para. 18*).

It therefore considers that

> "persistently low enrolment rates ... at all levels of education, together with the deterioration in the quality of education can, among other things, undermine economic growth and sustainable development" (ibid.).

Further on, the Group adds that, notwithstanding some progress in this area, a number of factors, which it attempts to identify, constrain the implementation of the Secretary-General's recommendation.

My delegation firmly supports the measures and initiatives advocated by the Ad Hoc Working Group with respect both to the objectives prescribed for education, the development of skills required by the new world economy and the contribution to the efforts of the African countries in their struggle against the AIDS pandemic, malaria and tuberculosis, and to the necessary massive contribution of financial resources. In agreement with the Ad Hoc Working Group, my delegation believes that the contribution of resources alone will not facilitate access to education for a larger number of people and that, along with sound management of public affairs, wise policies must be adopted.

Given the number of conflicts that are hampering Africa's development, the Ad Hoc Working Group wisely decided this year to choose as its second theme of discussion the question of conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building. With respect to the efforts made in this area, it notes the important role that the United Nations continues to play in the prevention and settlement of conflicts and in the maintenance of peace in Africa.

Mr. Sevilla Somoza (Nicaragua), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Considering that conflict prevention in general and development of effective preventive mechanisms remain a key priority area for the United Nations, the Ad Hoc Working Group mentions an initiative of the Secretary-General that, in many ways, is one of the most far-reaching initiatives of the United Nations to develop a coordinated and global approach to conflict prevention. I am speaking here of the establishment of an Inter-Agency Task Force for West Africa and the dispatch of a mission to that region in March 2001. In that regard, I wish to pay a particular tribute to the Secretary-General for his decision, recently endorsed by the Security Council, to ensure the opening in Dakar by January 2002 of the new Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa. My country, whose commitment to peace and stability is well known, will spare no effort in providing the Office and the Special Representative all the necessary cooperation and assistance.

Having stressed the many initiatives undertaken by African countries individually and through their regional organizations to prevent conflict and maintain peace and security on the continent, the Ad Hoc Working Group urges the international community wholeheartedly to support the activities of regional and subregional organizations. Moreover, considering that

post-conflict peace-building is a crucial element of conflict prevention — of which it is an integral part — the Group again requests greater financial support for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes and reiterates its proposal

> "that the funding of such programmes through the regular budget of peacekeeping operations be given adequate consideration as an alternative approach to an effective and permanent solution to the shortfall in resources" (ibid., *para. 52*).

However, apart from the concrete proposals of the Ad Hoc Working Group, what stands out is its insistence on the need for a comprehensive approach. A comprehensive approach is needed in order to better address the deep-rooted causes of conflict and the sources of potential conflict. All partners must adopt a coordinated and comprehensive approach to support growth aimed at eliminating poverty, ensuring development, supporting reconstruction and recovery and promoting peace-building efforts. Finally, the General Assembly must call on the Economic and Social Council

> "to focus more on the economic, social and humanitarian dimensions of conflict prevention and peace-building, with a view to improving coordination of activities in these areas, including through contacts between the relevant United Nations intergovernmental bodies" (ibid., *para. 55*).

I cannot conclude without welcoming once again the rigorous approach followed by the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group in assessing the progress achieved in the two areas concerned. It is certainly that marked sense of rigor and the desire to follow a comprehensive, coherent and coordinated approach in all cases that prompted it to propose to the General Assembly that the Group suspend its activities during the fifty-sixth session in order to allow for a review of new measures to implement and follow up initiatives related to Africa, given the upcoming review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s and related initiatives, which should be guided by the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

My delegation supports that recommendation, as well as the recommendation to assign the special Interdepartmental/Inter-Agency Task Force the functions of a permanent focal point within the Secretariat in order to monitor the implementation of the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. However, in the spirit of transparency, the composition of that Task Force must be made known to everyone.

Ms. Tan (Singapore): My delegation would like to commend Ambassador Shamshad Ahmad of Pakistan and Ambassador Inocencio Arias of Spain, the two Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, for their untiring efforts in chairing several meetings and in producing the Group's report. Singapore concurs with its recommendations. We also thank the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries for providing its invaluable support and expertise to the work of the Working Group.

It has been more than three years since the issuance of the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. Given the comprehensiveness of the latest progress report, it is clear that considerable progress has been achieved in implementing the recommendations contained in the 1998 report.

We are happy that this year our Working Group focused on two fundamental areas: education, and conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building. From our own experience in South-East Asia, we have found that sustained economic growth is difficult, if not impossible, without enduring peace and stability as well as a strong commitment to investing in human resources.

We are pleased that there continues to be strong international recognition of the special needs of Africa. That commitment was reiterated at the highest level with the Millennium Summit Declaration, adopted by our leaders last year. That commitment is strengthened when we learn of positive developments in Africa that tend to be overlooked when the news media reports predominantly on the negative news of the continent. For example, over the period 1990 to 1999, gross domestic product growth in more than 10 sub-Saharan African countries averaged a steady 3 to 4 per cent annually. Star performers like Uganda and Mozambique averaged 7.2 per cent and 6.2 per cent, respectively.

The recent World Bank study of 10 African economies entitled *Aid and Reform in Africa* provides evidence that given the right conditions, economic growth and poverty reduction can be achieved. The report highlights the examples of Uganda and Ghana, which it classifies as successful reformers. While the study recognizes the importance of aid, its findings show that the successes in these two countries were primarily the result of enlightened domestic policies adopted by the leadership. In fact, when they started out reforms, their aid levels vis-à-vis other African countries were lower, and financial support took off only as policies developed.

Those are instructive lessons. The key question, as always, remains whether the international community and African countries can work together and mobilize the necessary political will to respond effectively to interrelated political, economic, humanitarian and social crises faced by the continent.

We have had other good news lately. There have been increasing signs that African leaders are determined to act together to change the fate of their peoples. Regional leaders have come together to solve security problems within their regions — with some success, as has been the case with the conflicts in the Great Lakes region. More significantly, African leaders embarked on a bold new approach in pan-African cooperation this year when, at the thirty-seventh Organization of African Unity (OAU) summit, held in Lusaka, they endorsed the formation of the African Union. They also adopted the New African Initiative — since renamed the New Partnership for Africa's Development — which, in the Initiative's own words, African countries aim "to extricate themselves and the continent from the malaise of underdevelopment and exclusion in a globalizing world".

President Frederick Chiluba of Zambia, who, as the incoming Chairman of the OAU, will preside over the transition of the OAU to the African Union, indicated clearly Africa's appreciation of the urgency of the tasks when he observed that

> "Africa does not have the luxury of time. If we procrastinate ... time will pass us by."

This sense of commitment, determination and urgency among African leaders should be applauded and supported by the international community.

While the formation of the African Union is a welcome development, subregional organizations such as the Southern African Development Community and the Economic Community of West African States continue to play important roles. As can be seen in the progress reports of the Secretary-General, both organizations have been at the forefront of conflict mediation and peacekeeping in Africa. It is crucial that the international community continues to support their efforts.

The increasing United Nations involvement and interest in peacekeeping in Africa prove that the international community has not turned its back on Africa. Indeed, compared to just two years ago, the situations in Ethiopia and Eritrea, Sierra Leone and the Great Lakes region have improved considerably. We also welcome the establishment of a Transitional Government in Burundi and the deployment of an interim security protection unit to facilitate the transition process, both of which have been supported by the United Nations in Security Council resolution 1375 (2001).

We are also pleased to learn of the United Nations Development Programme growth triangle pilot programme for Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia. Such initiatives facilitate good-neighbourliness and promote closer economic ties. We also agree with the Secretary-General's assessment on the need for an integrated subregional approach to be developed towards conflict prevention and peacekeeping. We therefore welcome the positive news of the decision to establish the United Nations Office in West Africa.

The recovery of Africa cannot be achieved by the sheer will of the people of Africa alone. Africa needs the international community's help if its efforts are to succeed. While Africa may have the will, and appreciate the urgency, to act, it clearly lacks the resources and technical knowledge that are also prerequisites for success. According to a 2001 report by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, foreign direct investment in Africa has continued to fall in the last few years, and has in fact gone below 1 per cent of the world total in 2000. Africa clearly finds itself on an uneven playing field with regard to trade and investment matters. The international community should try to create a level field for Africa.

Africa's problems have long preoccupied us. We are aware that, in an ever-shrinking world, what happens in one part of the world has an impact on every other part. In the case of Africa, we have the opportunity today to join its people in a critical partnership to fight poverty, underdevelopment and marginalization. Africa needs active international participation to support recovery efforts. We hope that today's debate will generate a stronger international commitment to help Africa.

Mr. Wang Yingfan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Over the past year the United Nations and the international community at large have made fresh efforts in assisting Africa in preventing conflicts and promoting economic development. The Security Council has been giving priority to addressing hotspot issues and maintaining regional peace in Africa. The General Assembly's Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group has also done some useful work in this regard. However, conflicts in some parts of Africa have not yet ended. Many difficulties stand in the way of the fight against poverty, illiteracy and disease.

Conflicts in the African region have complex causes. Some have grown out of territorial, religious and ethnic disputes remaining from colonial times. Others have their roots in real problems such as poverty, underdevelopment and lack of peacekeeping capacity. Therefore, an integrated approach has to be adopted in the light of situations on the ground to address not only the symptoms but also the root causes.

In our view, no one in the world knows better than the Africans themselves how to seek a fundamental solution to African conflicts. Regional organizations such as the Organization of African Unity, the Economic Community of West African States and the Southern African Development Community, as well as the African countries themselves, are making unremitting efforts in solving and easing the conflicts in Africa. The international community should therefore take real action in providing the necessary political, economic and financial support in an effort to strengthen the capacity of African countries in the areas of conflict prevention, peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building. All efforts by the United Nations and the international community to the same end must be in keeping with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, the local realities and full respect for the will of the African countries and peoples.

Poverty, backwardness and general and economic underdevelopment are underlying causes of armed conflict and instability in the areas of Africa in question. It can well be said that the issue of Africa, in the final analysis, is a development issue. At present, developing countries are facing daunting tasks in reaching the development goals set by the United Nations Millennium Declaration. African countries have even greater difficulties in this regard due to the worsening of poverty and disease.

To attain durable peace in Africa, attention must be given not only to promoting solutions to hotspot issues but also, more fundamentally, to vigorously helping African countries to achieve development. Therefore, the United Nations should actively cooperate with relevant efforts by the African countries themselves, because development in Africa will benefit not only the continent but the rest of the world as well. The United Nations should intensify its efforts, increase inputs and play a greater role in the promotion of sustainable development in Africa.

The International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development to be held next year could be important opportunities for promoting the fulfilment of the development goals contained in the Millennium Declaration. We hope the two conferences will be able to achieve substantial progress in meeting the special needs of Africa and promoting sustainable development in the region. At the same time, we strongly appeal to the developed countries to take real action to meet as soon as possible the official development assistance targets of 0.7 per cent of their gross national product, to increase investment in Africa, to expand debt relief and cancellation programmes and to improve market access for African products so as to contribute to integrating Africa into the mainstream of world trade and economic development.

The Chinese Government has always attached importance and given support to African countries and peoples in their efforts to realize peace and development. As a developing country, China faces its own pressing problems and difficulties on the road to development. That is why China can better understand what Africa is confronted with and why China is willing to do all it can to assist Africa.

In this connection, China attaches importance to the follow-up to the China-Africa Cooperation Forum, which was held last year in Beijing. So far, we have signed debt exemption protocols with 21 African countries and have expanded personnel training programmes for African countries. Furthermore, the first high-level consultation on follow-up to the Forum has been held, which adopted, in principle, the mechanism and procedure of the follow-up to the China-Africa Cooperation Forum, as well as other documents. We are confident that, as such efforts deepen, the friendly cooperation between China and African countries will be further consolidated and developed.

Mr. Hønningstad (Norway): Norway welcomes the opportunity to discuss the follow-up of the important report by the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa.

The sad fact is that there are still a number of serious violent conflicts in Africa, and the continent continues to lag behind the rest of the world in economic and social development. The slow growth of African economies is one of the main obstacles to achieving sustainable development and improving the living conditions of the majority of the African people. Poverty is a cause as well as a consequence of violent conflicts and is endemic to many parts of Africa.

Norway welcomes the report of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa focusing on conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building and education.

In spite of a number of positive programmes and projects investing in human resources, the Working Group notes with concern that human resources capacity in many African countries remains weak and is inadequate for the challenges of the twenty-first century. The agreed international development goals of primary education for all by 2015 and of eliminating gender disparities in education by 2005 remain elusive for most African countries. In order to improve education in general, and education on human rights and democracy in particular, concerted commitment is needed to finance and implement comprehensive plans of action.

The educational needs of refugees, displaced persons and those in camps for the demobilized must be addressed as an integral part of peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building.

The Government of Norway is committed to increasing its support for education in developing countries and welcomes the suggestions by the Working Group for further action and measures to promote human resources development in Africa.

In paragraph 15 of his recent progress report on prevention of armed conflict, the Secretary-General underscored the need to intensify efforts to move from a "culture of reaction to one of prevention". The report focuses on the root causes of conflict and the need to develop long-term conflict prevention strategies. Peace-building is also an important part of the comprehensive approach to United Nations peace operations set forth in the Brahimi report. Peace-building is expected to be further elaborated on in the upcoming report of the Secretary-General, and we are looking forward to a comprehensive discussion of the challenges before us when the Council resumes its deliberation of this important issue.

Conflict prevention and peace-building must remain a key priority area for the United Nations. In this context, effective cooperation with regional organizations is important. Norway has for many years supported a strengthening of the peace-building capacity of the United Nations Secretariat and development agencies, and will continue to do so.

Although considerable efforts have been made to prevent and settle conflicts, the challenges of post-conflict peace-building remain daunting. The Working Group report lists a number of constraints on the effective implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General's report. These must be adequately addressed.

Norway welcomes the suggestions in the Working Group's report for further action to implement the Secretary-General's recommendations for promoting peace and sustainable development in Africa. While recognizing that the primary responsibility for achieving peace and sustainable development rests with African leaders and organizations, it is essential that the institutional capability and coordinating mechanisms of the United Nations are commensurate with the challenges we face so that we can act and react in a well-informed, coordinated, coherent, comprehensive and timely manner.

The United Nations, with its comprehensive mandate, must take the lead in designing ways and means that would make it easier to coordinate bilateral and regional efforts with those of the Organization. The issue of poverty needs to be addressed in peace processes in a comprehensive manner in country-specific situations. Post-conflict peace-building must be a vital element and an integral part of conflict management. Meeting the challenges of post-conflict peace-building requires a holistic approach and substantial financial resources. Cooperation on issues of conflict prevention and peace-building should be a priority issue in the consultations between the Presidents of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.

Norway welcomes the efforts of African leaders to develop an African-owned and African-led framework for action aimed at the sustainable development of the African continent. We recommend that the General Assembly call upon the international community to support the initiative by African leaders for a New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which was adopted by the Organization of African Unity in Lusaka in July of this year. Through this initiative, African leaders are taking responsibility for leading the political and development processes. The initiative breaks with the traditional separation between the political, economic and social fields. It recognizes that peace, democracy, human rights and good governance are preconditions for development. In recognition of the close relationship between peace, security and sustainable development, a separate subcommittee has been set up by the NEPAD partners to focus on conflict prevention and resolution. Norway would like to congratulate the NEPAD partners on this decision.

The implementation of the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report is a priority area that must remain high on the agenda of the United Nations system and of the Member States. The General Assembly must continue to play the primary role in monitoring the implementations of the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report and in assessing the progress made.

Norway shares the view that for the Secretary-General to be able to present extensive annual reports to the General Assembly on this agenda item, a formalized structure and permanent focal point should be established within the Secretariat to closely monitor the progress achieved within the United Nations system. It is essential that the focal point be provided with the necessary human, managerial and administrative resources to allow it effectively to discharge its functions.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Despite the successive developments that the African continent has witnessed during the past years — be they positive or negative or related to the resolution of the conflicts on its territories or the promotion of economic and social development in its countries — we can now say with complete confidence that Africa has begun a new chapter in its contemporary history following the entry into force of the constitutive act of the African Union and the launching of the New African Initiative, which is now known as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). If these two events reflect the growing political awareness among the leaders of the African countries that they bear the primary responsibility for determining their future, then they must also be a point of departure for the international community to make efforts from now on to achieve lasting peace, promote democracy, good governance, economic well-being, social development and educational opportunities throughout the continent.

From this standpoint, we welcome the intention of the United Nations — in coordination with the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity — to review and assess the existing programme of cooperation between the two organizations and to modify it in a manner that assists Africa in developing the African Union and in establishing its new institutions. We also value the expressions of support by the international community for NEPAD, which is an initiative based on the determination of Africans to extricate themselves and their continent from the cycle of poverty and marginalization in an international environment characterized by globalization and economic and trade interdependence. We hope that this support will be translated into concrete measures and an international plan of action, with a specific timetable to be adopted in the General Assembly, to allow Africa to achieve the ambitious goals of this partnership and to address the many challenges that must be overcome.

The progress report of the Secretary-General addresses the efforts undertaken by the United Nations to respond to situations of conflict at their various

stages and to build durable peace and promote economic development on the continent. Allow me to briefly address a number of points that my delegation finds it important to highlight.

First, Egypt welcomes the growing awareness within the United Nations system of the necessity of addressing African conflicts at all their stages, starting with confronting the root causes that lead to the eruption of conflict through peacemaking efforts before a crisis escalates, then peacekeeping after a conflict has erupted and, finally, post-conflict peace-building to prevent their resumption. While Egypt appreciates the role played by the United Nations to comprehensively address certain crises on the continent and resolve some conflicts after they have erupted — as is now the case in West Africa in general, and in Sierra Leone in particular — it also believes that the response of the United Nations has not been balanced in a few other cases.

The situation in Somalia, for example, cannot continue as it has been without the international community assuming its responsibilities to restore peace and stability to this country that has suffered from a lack of serious international efforts whether for peacemaking among its factions, or for peacekeeping on its territory or for peace-building within its society.

Secondly, African leaders have committed themselves to enhancing existing mechanisms to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts at the subregional and continental levels and to ensuring that these mechanisms are used to restore and maintain peace in the continent. The African leaders have also decided to maintain the objectives and principles enshrined in the Cairo Declaration, establishing the Organization of African Unity Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution as an integral part of the objectives and principles of the African Union.

If Africa is to succeed in playing a more effective role in confronting the increasing challenges imposed by the complex nature of the conflicts on its territories, then it must also expect the international community to increase its support for efforts undertaken in the continent, be it in the context of the OAU/African Union or its subregional organizations or by a coalition of interested African States. This support could be given particularly through generous contributions to the two trust funds established by the OAU and the United Nations for this purpose, as well as through activities to develop the continent's capabilities in the field of early warning and through the provision of financial, military and logistical support to the missions deployed by the OAU, as undertaken in the Comoros and the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Thirdly, despite the expansion of the role played by the OAU to resolve the ongoing conflicts in the continent and even the development of its own capacities that enable it to play a more effective role in this field, we must not forget that there are many cases that require — or that will require — the involvement of the international community with all its influence and the assumption by the United Nations of all its responsibilities to maintain peace and security in Africa when Africans are unable to do so themselves.

Here it is important for us to reaffirm that the peacekeeping operations that the United Nations establishes in Africa — like the existing operations in the Balkans region and East Timor — must receive the necessary military, human, financial and logistical support commensurate with the complex nature of conflicts in Africa. They must also remain deployed in the mission area, without the Security Council withdrawing them, until the situation in the country stabilizes or until their departure is followed by the development of an international framework for peace-building in the country. That can be done through the application of the concepts agreed in the context of what is now known as "no exit without a strategy".

Fourthly, at the same time, if African countries, individually and collectively, wish to enhance their own capabilities in the area of peacekeeping in the continent, then we must also express our deep regret at the dangerous tendency that has taken root before our very eyes, which is embodied in the refusal of influential Western nations, particularly those with the requisite major military capabilities, to participate with their troops and military contingents in the operations that the Security Council establishes in Africa.

We therefore insist that efforts to implement the Brahimi recommendations and to enhance the capacities of the United Nations and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations be coupled with the explicit and clear commitment of Western States to be prepared to demonstrate the required political will to contribute, and if need be to sacrifice, their personnel alongside

the personnel of African countries and other developing nations that have not hesitated to contribute to the success of existing operations both within and outside the continent.

Fifthly, as we approach the fourth and final preparatory meeting of the International Conference on Financing for Development, scheduled to take place in Mexico next March, we wish to stress the importance of paying special attention to Africa, specifically to the issues on the agenda related to the least developed African countries. These include increasing the scope and efficiency of official development assistance, helping African countries to attract foreign direct investment and extricating them from the vicious cycle of the heavy debt crisis.

We also wish to focus particularly on providing all necessary assistance in order to enhance the institutional capacities of African countries. This should be done in parallel with measures to enable more effective African participation in economic decision-making mechanisms at the international level, thus ensuring a balance of interests among partners in development and contributing to the establishment of a more just, peaceful and stable African continent and world.

Despite the recommendation to suspend the activities of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa during the current session of the General Assembly, we reaffirm the need for the Assembly, as the primary deliberative and legislative organ of the United Nations, to continue to monitor implementation of the Secretary-General's recommendations. We thus stress the need for the Secretariat to constantly inform Member States of the efforts undertaken by the United Nations system in this area, and we hope that the Secretary-General will provide the necessary human and administrative resources to the Task Force led by Mr. Ibrahim Gambari. We thank him for his efforts in providing this report for other efforts aimed at developing the African continent and helping it face its challenges. This Task Force, led by Ambassador Gambari, will soon become the permanent focal point within the Secretariat charged with undertaking this role.

Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan): At the outset, let me thank you, Mr. President, and also the Secretary-General for the progress report that we have before us on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General. This, together with the report of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa, are excellent inputs for today's debate.

My Spanish colleague, Ambassador Arias, and I draw particular satisfaction from the fact that we were associated with the Ad Hoc Working Group during the year under review as Vice-Chairmen under the stewardship of President Harri Holkeri, who took personal interest in the activities of the Working Group and ensured the timely finalization of its report, which is before us.

I must also acknowledge the assistance that we have received from Mr. Ibrahim Gambari, Under-Secretary-General and Adviser on Africa. We are grateful for the assistance that he and his staff in the Secretariat have provided us.

The objective of achieving peace and development in Africa has been on the priority list of the international community for more than a decade. Virtually no international meeting or conference has adopted a document without giving special attention to that continent. Principal organs of the United Nations — the Economic and Social Council, the Security Council and the General Assembly — have constantly focused on the problems of Africa in the context of their respective mandates and have also established their own follow-up mechanisms. In addition, scores of multilateral and bilateral initiatives have been launched to promote the development of Africa. And the General Assembly, as we all know, with the same objective in view, established its Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group. Since its establishment in 1998, the Working Group has remained actively engaged in monitoring the implementation of United Nations initiatives for peace and development in Africa.

The Working Group has been deliberating all United Nations initiatives on Africa; during the year under review it adopted a more focused approach, addressing two key areas, namely education, and conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building. As is evident from its report, the Working Group made significant progress on the task mandated to it.

The Working Group rightly recognized that, as Africa's future lies in its people, it must therefore invest in them, particularly in their education. The Working Group considered education to be an engine of African economic growth and development. However, it also considered that human resource development cannot be addressed in isolation. Overall peace and security and sustained economic growth are also crucial for promoting African development.

The Working Group recognized that underdevelopment coupled with continued conflict is making Africa's prospects for development bleak. Consequently, Africa is the poorest region of the world, accounting for less than 2 per cent of the world's trade. That statement can be substantiated by the fact that during 1997 the combined income of 48 countries of Africa was less than the income of one small developed country in Europe. The situation has not improved since then. Only this year, another African country was added to the list of least developed countries. Over the years, the number of conflicts in Africa has continued to multiply. Since 1960, nearly 20 African countries have experienced fratricidal conflict. Today, about one fifth of the African population is living in a conflict situation. Inter-State and intra-State conflicts have caused indescribable human suffering. Conflict entails heavy social and economic costs not only for the affected countries but also for their neighbours. In addition to its direct economic and human costs, continued conflict leads to a significant increase in crimes and violence, both of which detract from development in many ways. Conflict also disrupts agricultural activities, and this is exacerbated by the fact that 60 per cent of Africa is vulnerable to drought.

The Working Group rightly pointed out that the challenges in Africa are formidable. We believe that those challenges are not insurmountable. Many regions of the world have overcome such difficulties, and so can Africa — of course, with the support of the international community. The international community must therefore extend the requisite helping hand to regional and national efforts for the achievement of the twin goals of peace and development in the African region. Africa alone would find it difficult to face these formidable challenges. We therefore need to assist Africa in addressing the root causes of conflict. This requires a concerted international effort at two levels. In the first instance, there is a need to focus on the underlying political and security aspects of instability in that continent. In parallel, economic and social problems afflicting parts of Africa need to be tackled through a comprehensive assistance programme with adequate resources. But assistance loses its value if it is burdened with conditionalities or motivated by political returns. Neither peace nor development should be held to ransom.

While Africa is making its efforts to catch up with the rest of the world, it deserves the international community's full support in its endeavours. Here, I would like to support the call for the provision of adequate and unconditional resources for social sector needs of African countries. Africa needs sufficient investment to provide education for all. All institutional stakeholders need to participate in developing this vision for Africa.

We are satisfied that during the past two years the Working Group has played an active role in highlighting the urgent need to address the causes of conflict and the promotion of sustainable development in Africa. We sincerely hope that those efforts will be made sustainable through the putting in place of a permanent monitoring mechanism.

Without enhanced official development assistance, increased investment, a durable solution to the external debt burden, market access for products and services from the African region and integration of the African countries into the global economy, efforts to attain the goals of durable peace and sustainable development are not likely to make any headway.

Human resource development remains a major challenge for African countries. Special programmes should be launched for capacity building and for promoting education and literacy. The international community should strengthen efforts to transfer technology to Africa on concessional and preferential terms.

The Working Group this year, focused as it was on education and on conflict prevention and peace-building, has provided us with a number of important, action-oriented recommendations to achieve the twin goals of peace and development in Africa. We need to follow up those recommendations. To do so it will be necessary to strengthen and reinforce the existing set-up within the Secretariat dealing with the problems and needs of Africa. The international community, particularly the United Nations system, should take all necessary measures to support African efforts.

particularly the New Partnership for Africa's Development launched at Abuja in October 2001.

Pakistan continues to support all United Nations initiatives that would bring peace and prosperity to Africa. We have consistently supported United Nations peacekeeping operations in Africa. We have participated on a large scale in these operations. Our military and civilian personnel have been part of United Nations operations in Somalia, Namibia, Liberia, Western Sahara, Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We have a binding commitment to our partnership with Africa. I was personally privileged to be part of this partnership in my capacity as one of the two Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa.

As in the past, Pakistan will continue to lend its moral and material support to the development efforts of the African countries. Our Technical Assistance Programme for Africa is an ongoing process of training young professionals in diverse fields. As soon as the South Institute of Information Technology is established in Pakistan, we will be in a position to offer special training facilities in information technology for students from Africa.

African people have suffered for too long. The challenges faced by Africa are colossal. We genuinely need to launch a global action to ensure that the internationally agreed goals for Africa are achieved over a specified time frame. Words — not lengthy reports — are needed, and words should be turned into deeds. Otherwise, the suffering of Africa will continue unabated.

The international community must launch a concerted effort to promote peace and sustainable development in the African continent. This is our moral obligation and political responsibility.

Mr. Effah-Apenteng (Ghana): I should like to commend the Chairman of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa, former President of the General Assembly Mr. Harri Holkeri, and the two Vice-Chairmen, Ambassadors Ahmad and Arias, for the effective manner in which they carried out their responsibility. We found the report of the Working Group very well done. My delegation also thanks the Secretary-General for his report.

Once again, we have an opportunity to address the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. This time, however, we do so against the background of the upcoming review and appraisal of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s and, more significantly, the adoption by African leaders of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

As a framework for a comprehensive and integrated approach to Africa's development, developed by Africans themselves, NEPAD, in our view, provides the frame of reference for all activities to be undertaken by the international community in support of Africa's development efforts. This was recognized by the 2001 high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council in Geneva and is also highlighted in the report of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group that is before us today.

The coincidence of the premise underlying both NEPAD and the Secretary-General's report underscores the enduring relevance of the report and the importance of the exercise to monitor implementation of the recommendations contained in it. How the United Nations and the international community address the critical nexus between peace and development and the issues of conflict prevention, poverty eradication and development remains to be determined. The need for implementation of the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report, within a holistic framework, however, remains a priority and must be treated as such within the United Nations.

The assessment of the two themes selected by the Working Group reveals that the priority tag attached to the implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General's report has not been matched by the requisite political will. The two themes, conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building, and education, are crucial components for achieving durable peace and sustainable development in Africa.

As the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Mr. Koichiro Matsuura, stated at the World Education Forum, held in Dakar, Senegal, last year, education "is

the essential bedrock for the building of sustainable peace and development". In the area of education, however, despite the efforts made by African countries with support from the United Nations system and the international community, a great deal remains to be done. The report of the Working Group notes that "human resource capacity in many African countries remains weak and inadequate to respond to the challenges of the twenty-first century" (*A/56/45, para. 18*).

Indeed, the report goes on to report low rates of educational enrolment at all levels of education and the deterioration in the quality of education as well as persisting gender disparities.

The factors accounting for this unenviable situation are many, including the failure of some African countries to accord priority to education or redefine their educational needs to reflect the yearnings of their societies and the demands of a knowledge-based global economy. Yet two of the most critical factors — the impact of macro-reforms and structural adjustment programmes and inadequate external support for capacity-building — emanate from policies pushed by the international community.

Undoubtedly, progress in delivering debt relief, coupled with enhanced market access for African countries, would enable those countries to make the necessary investments in education, which would support growth and development.

It is clear from the data, however, that resources alone are not the key to achieving the educational objectives of African countries. African policy makers need to put an increasing focus on curriculum development to promote nation-building and an attachment to the values of democracy. Education must create the bonds of an inclusive society and must be innovative enough to cover not only the formal educational system but also the non-formal, which covers the truly marginalized in society. Finally, education must be responsive to economic opportunity, particularly the need for science education, and, in this regard, its design must involve Governments, civil society and the private sector.

We believe that the fastest and most effective way for Africa to achieve its educational goals is by adopting flexible and cost-effective, or less expensive, delivery systems. Information and communication technology provides a defining opportunity for Africa to provide instruction and knowledge universally, without being constrained by the limitations of inadequate manpower and structural resources. The information and communication technology challenge, in the context of the pursuit of peace and sustainable development, requires that we build a coalition, a partnership that reflects the promise of technology and the depth of our commitment to address an issue so critical to our concerns over Africa.

We support the general approach that focuses on conflict prevention, particularly on the development of effective preventive mechanisms. We note in this connection that considerable work has to be done to develop a coordinated and global approach to conflict prevention. We are particularly hopeful that the establishment of an Inter-Agency Task Force for West Africa and the dispatch of a Mission to that region constitute a leap forward in terms of lessons learned.

We are similarly supportive of the initiatives to set up United Nations offices in certain countries in Africa. Paragraphs 27 to 32 of the report give details of the efforts made in the prevention and settlement of conflicts in Africa.

Notwithstanding these efforts, it is obvious, as the report rightly states, that the challenges of post-conflict peace-building remain daunting. We agree with the conclusions of the Working Group on the factors which have impeded the implementation of the Secretary-General's report in this area.

While we recognize that good governance — including the respect and promotion of human rights, accountability of leaders and respect for democratic freedoms — are essential prerequisites for peace, and while we expect the small number of African countries where these conditions do not obtain to shoulder their responsibilities, we cannot ignore the simple fact that poverty, underdevelopment and weak institutional capacity are absolutely critical factors in creating the conditions that lead to conflict.

Any useful assessment of this component must therefore address the impact of macroeconomic policies, including unconsidered liberalization, particularly at the international level, on countries susceptible to conflict.

Regrettably, the financial support given by rich countries for post-conflict rehabilitation and the reintegration of demobilized soldiers, as well as to

countries of the region that are shouldering peacekeeping and peace-building responsibilities in Africa, has been comparatively inadequate. As a community, we must ask why it is that we are able to mobilize massive resources when conflicts erupt, even though we were not able to raise a fraction of those resources when those conflicts could still have been prevented.

Member States also need to question their own contribution to the ineffectiveness of the United Nations in addressing aspects of conflict prevention in Africa. The failure, for whatever reason, of the organs dealing with development and peace to coordinate their activities is an impediment to our effectiveness.

Similarly, we believe that a well-coordinated approach by the United Nations departments and agencies dealing with African issues is essential to achieving the objectives of the Secretary-General's recommendations. We note in this regard the excellent work done by Mr. Gambari, Under-Secretary-General and Adviser on Africa, in coordinating the Secretariat's contribution to the Working Group. We would like to encourage greater coordination on African matters.

We call for urgent consideration of the creation of an ad hoc advisory group on countries emerging from conflict in Africa, in order to assess their humanitarian and economic needs and to develop a long-term programme of support integrating relief into development.

I have already made reference to the acute relevance of the process of review and appraisal of the New Agenda and of the implementation of NEPAD to the implementation, monitoring and future assessment of the recommendations of the Secretary-General's report.

Ghana supports the proposal in the Working Group's report to suspend the activities of the Working Group during the fifty-sixth session in order to consider further measures for the implementation and monitoring of initiatives on Africa. The Working Group, in the light of the outcome of that exercise, would re-examine its mandate during the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

We believe that a coordinated and integrated approach for monitoring implementation should be taken by the Interdepartmental/Inter-Agency Task Force, in the capacity of Secretariat focal point, for the consideration of the General Assembly. In order to do its work effectively, the Task Force needs to be strengthened with human and financial resources.

We find ourselves at a particularly auspicious moment as we review the processes of United Nations support for Africa. The leaders of the continent have produced their own development initiative, considered by the entire international community as credible, comprehensive and doable. We at the United Nations must respond to the challenge by ensuring that our decisions on the way forward match our commitment to an enhanced partnership with Africa.

Mr. Lee Ho-jin (Republic of Korea): The Republic of Korea wishes to extend its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his concise report (A/56/371) on the implementation of the recommendations contained in his 1998 report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa.

Africa as a whole has made significant economic and political advances in recent years, but in many parts of the continent Africa remains threatened and its progress impeded by conflicts. The consequences of those conflicts have seriously undermined Africa's efforts to ensure long-term stability, prosperity and peace for its peoples. Needless to say, conflict prevention begins and ends with the promotion of human security and of sustained development.

The causes of conflicts range from historical legacies to internal and external factors to special motivations. I believe that abject poverty and underdevelopment are one of the main causes of the frustrating conflicts in many subregions of Africa. Ending the vicious circle of poverty and conflicts is therefore a demanding challenge indeed. According to 2001 *World Economic and Social Survey* published by the United Nations, the annual growth rate of Africa's gross domestic product has been a mere 3 per cent for the last four consecutive years. It is also discouraging to note that the continent suffers from dwindling external financial resources, debt hangover, the HIV/AIDS pandemic and reduced export earnings.

The international community has made untiring efforts to address the African challenges. Thanks to United Nations peacekeeping activities, the frequency and magnitude of regional conflicts have shown substantially decreasing trends. The special needs of Africa have been repeatedly recognized in major

United Nations initiatives and conferences and, in particular, at the Millennium Summit held last year.

In this context, the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa and its follow-up actions are particularly commendable. Throughout the process, earlier findings were reconfirmed: that peace, democracy and good governance are prerequisites for sustainable development in Africa, and that comprehensive strategies need to be developed to address the root causes of conflicts.

A remarkable event in the African development process was the adoption of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) by the Abuja Summit, held in October 2001. NEPAD is particularly valuable, as it was designed by African leaders themselves and presents a comprehensive strategy for socio-economic and political development based on a market mechanism and on the common values of democracy and good governance.

Given these inherently multifaceted challenges, the United Nations should continue to play a leading role in coordinating divergent activities and in assisting African countries to achieve peace, security and sustained economic development. In this regard, I would like to stress the following aspects, among others.

First, there is pressing need to end armed conflicts, which prevent political, social and economic development in Africa. Our experience has confirmed that peace, democracy, human rights and development are complementary and mutually reinforcing. It is crucial to adopt an integrated approach comprising peacemaking, peace-building and post-conflict rehabilitation. To this end, it is important to mobilize the political will to translate rhetoric into reality.

Secondly, we must make continued efforts to support NEPAD, which is creating true ownership of its development process and is aimed at the eradication of poverty in Africa. It is encouraging to note that the G-8 summit held last July agreed to launch a comprehensive development plan, which certainly supports NEPAD. The United Nations system should also take coherent and well-coordinated approaches in support of African initiatives for the years to come. The statement of support by the Secretary-General and the decision by the Administrative Committee on Coordination in April to support only African-led and African-owned development plans, such as those that culminated in NEPAD, committed the whole United Nations system to such an approach.

Thirdly, in order to secure durable peace and economic development, substantial assistance needs to be provided to improve governance, infrastructure, capacity-building and human resources development. In particular, the role of education and training is ever more important in the emerging knowledge-based economy. In order to achieve the development goals set out in NEPAD, necessary resources, both domestic and foreign, must be mobilized. At the domestic level, an adequate environment should be provided for mobilizing national and foreign resources, while donors are requested to expand their support.

In conclusion, the next step will be for us to devote ourselves to the appraisal of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF) through the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole. The Republic of Korea hopes that the 10-year review of UN-NADAF will address Africa's development in more comprehensive manner, including issues of peace, security and sustainable development and supporting NEPAD.

Next year will be important for dealing with issues of development and poverty eradication, as two crucial international conferences will be held: the Monterrey Conference and the Johannesburg Summit. The Republic of Korea will continue to join the international effort to address durable peace, security and development in Africa.

Mr. De Ruyt (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated countries Cyprus, Malta and Turkey align themselves with this statement.

Africa is a priority for the European Union. Our strategic partnership was reaffirmed and consolidated in April 2000 at the Africa-Europe Summit in Cairo. The ministerial meeting following up the Cairo Summit, held just a few weeks ago in Brussels, once again confirmed the commitment of the heads of State of the European Union and Africa to work towards a

new strategic dimension for a comprehensive partnership between Africa and Europe.

That mid-term ministerial review enabled us to, inter alia, welcome the important work done in finding common ground on priority issues identified in the follow-up to the Cairo Summit, namely, conflict resolution, human rights, democracy and good governance, food security, AIDS, regional integration, the environment, debt and the restitution of cultural property. The results of this work will, of course, also be relevant in our discussions here on this agenda item.

The European Union would like first of all to thank the Secretary-General for his progress report on the implementation of his recommendations on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. We also encourage him to continue to develop the web site of the Ad Hoc Working Group, which in due course could become a working and reference tool.

The fact that Africa is the continent with the greatest number of conflicts, as well as the most significant development challenges, clearly shows that the philosophy underlying the Secretary-General's report of April 1998 (A/52/871) — namely, the importance of an integrated approach towards Africa — has remained entirely relevant. In fact, it has just been reaffirmed by our ministers in the declaration following the high-level debate in the Economic and Social Council.

Indeed, if it is true that peace alone does not make it possible to eradicate poverty, it no less true that there can be no real progress in the fight against poverty without lasting peace. There is no doubt that the Organization of African Unity will have an important role to play in this respect. The European Union agrees, however, that the subregional level will offer more opportunities to translate these general concepts into practical and integrated action on the ground, and it awaits with interest the Secretary-General's report to the Economic and Social Council on the Organization's various means of subregional coordination. In this connection, the European Union welcomed the dispatch of an inter-agency mission to West Africa in March 2001.

Regarding the part of the report dealing with conflict situations, the European Union very much appreciates the efforts being made by the Secretary-General to refine the instruments available to him and to broaden their use. Many of his initiatives are aimed at ensuring a more united and consistent response from the international community.

Conflicts in Africa have indeed become increasingly complex, involving a multitude of actors with widely diverging intentions. The appointment of mediators and the establishment of contact groups help to formulate a coordinated approach that is suited to the complexity of the situation. Increasingly, negotiation and mediation efforts are being undertaken by the African countries themselves. We believe that this is a positive development. At the same time, however, a close link must be maintained with the United Nations so that such efforts are realistic and their results in keeping with the capacity of the United Nations. Indeed, a key feature of truly effective cooperation is mutual respect for each other's capacities.

There is no doubt that the international community must be determined in tackling the economic interests which underlie the various conflicts in Africa. The exploitation of natural resources fuels war and defies the political responses formulated by the international community. The European Union fully supports the establishment of more rigorous monitoring of the observance of sanctions by setting up new mechanisms, such as panels of experts. But it remains essential to improve the coordination of such efforts and to avoid any duplication or overlap that might result from the simultaneous existence of several panels and mechanisms.

The European Union stresses the importance of multilateral instruments for disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. It encourages African countries to join existing instruments and to take all measures for effective follow-up. The problem of small arms is also of relevance in Africa. The European Union has participated actively in the fight against the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of small arms. Through its Joint Action, it has made commitments relating to the collection, control and destruction of such weapons, the promotion of disarmament and the demobilization and reintegration of former combatants.

The European Union is strongly committed to strengthening Africa's peacekeeping capacities. It encourages closer United Nations involvement in this area. Paragraph 8 of the Secretary-General's report mentions consultations with Member States on the

elaboration of terms of reference with a view to the formation of a working group to act as a forum for exchanging information. As far as we are aware, these consultations began in 1999 but have not been pursued. The European Union is in favour of such a working group and calls on the Secretariat to resume these consultations with States from both the African continent and elsewhere.

With regard to a special consultative group for countries emerging from conflict, the European Union does not want to engage in a debate here in the General Assembly on the proposal to create such a group. In conformity with the ministerial declaration to which I have referred, this question will be the subject of a debate in the Economic and Social Council in the first trimester of 2002. The European Union would not like to prejudge here any decision that belongs primarily to the Council.

With respect to building durable peace and promoting economic growth, and more particularly good governance, the European Union subscribes fully to the Secretary-General's analysis regarding the importance of transparent, accountable and effective public administration. Efforts to fight corruption as well as to promote decentralization, consolidation of democracy and respect for the rule of law are important aspects of national policies leading to the creation of such administration. These national efforts also help spread an environment that is favourable for development.

The importance of the role of the private sector goes without saying. We take note here of the various initiatives intended to strengthen it, and we encourage the United Nations system to continue along that path. Increasing the investment in human resources, health systems and the fight against contagious diseases, primarily AIDS but also malaria and tuberculosis, is an absolute priority for the continent.

As for the question of resources, the Union recognizes the catalysing role of official development assistance. The Union will therefore continue to support debt relief initiatives within the framework of the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative. Access of African countries to markets in developed countries also constitutes an important aspect of their economic development. The Union is convinced that its initiative to open its market unilaterally to the least developed countries — the "Everything but arms" initiative — and the future economic partnership agreements will contribute to that end.

With regard to the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group, the European Union welcomes the way it has worked this year. At the suggestion of the Bureau, the Working Group has discussed important, targeted themes for the African continent: how best to prevent the conflicts that might emerge there, what might be the most effective means to consolidate what is often too fragile a peace, and how to reinforce the education of youth and young adults so that they are better prepared to face the challenges of today — violence, globalization, poverty, AIDS. Member States' discussions have been particularly enriched by the valuable contributions from non-governmental organizations, and we would like to take this opportunity to thank them.

The recommendations of the Secretary-General contained in the 1998 report deserve continued follow-up, but it must be effective. It is now time for all of us to reflect together on an improved rationalization of African initiatives within the United Nations. The Group took a sensible decision in this regard: it agreed on a year of reflection. Like our African partners, the European Union hopes that the coming year will prove fruitful and that new ideas will emerge to strengthen the coherence of United Nations activities in Africa. We have full confidence in the staff of the Interdepartmental/Inter-Agency Task Force directed by Under-Secretary-General Ibrahim Gambari to assist us in this undertaking.

In the same context, we congratulate the Administrative Committee on Coordination on its decision to no longer consider further initiatives concerning Africa, and to work towards a unified framework for action based on the rationalization of existing initiatives. The final examination and evaluation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s will be an opportunity for us to examine together all the initiatives launched in Africa.

The European Union is hopeful that our discussions on this agenda item will also be marked by the new enthusiasm felt in the African continent since the meeting of heads of State and Government in Lusaka last July. It is encouraging that our discussions can take place in the light of a new recovery plan for

Africa, coming from Africa itself, the New African Initiative. In this context, we also welcome the Abuja summit on 23 October, which made it possible to consolidate this New Partnership for Africa's Development and take the first series of operational decisions. This New Partnership shows clearly that the African countries are ready to take control of their own development. It also stresses the importance of peace and security and recognizes democracy, transparency, sound public administration, the authority of law and human rights as fundamental factors in development.

It is now a matter for all development partners to support them in this effort. We welcome the support expressed by the United Nations system for the implementation of the New Partnership at the recent meeting of the Administrative Committee on Coordination in New York. At their meeting on 10 October, the European Union and the heads of State of Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa expressed their strong determination to set up links between the institutional frameworks of the New African Initiative and the European Union and to develop a regular dialogue about the evolution of the New Initiative. The Union reaffirms its willingness to continue its cooperation with the United Nations with a view to responding to the challenges confronting Africa.

Mr. Johnson (United States of America): The Secretary-General stated in his report on the causes of conflict and promotion of durable peace and sustainable development, that Africa as a whole has begun to make significant economic and political progress. The advances achieved in some countries are truly remarkable and need to be remembered when we focus on those countries where development has not moved forward.

The 2001 United Nations Development Programme *Human Development Report* shows that much progress has been made over the last 30 years. More people than ever are enjoying the benefits of clean water, better health, access to education and a decent income. It also shows that conflict has a devastating impact on progress. Nearly 1 billion people do not have access to safe drinking water, 11 million children below age 5 still die every year from preventable causes, 325 million children who should be in primary or secondary schools are not, and 1.2 billion people still live on less than $1 a day. Too many of these are in Africa. Too many African countries are affected by the development catastrophe caused by current and recent armed conflict.

Decades-long conflicts in some countries have visited extreme hardship on their inhabitants and have contributed to regional instability. In addition to the enormous human suffering involved, conflict has severe long-term economic and social consequences, as it destroys the building blocks of development. It is relatively easy to restore basic infrastructure after a conflict has ended. It is much more difficult to restore trust. Lack of trust among the people hampers efforts to institute democratic governance and transparent institutions and, hence, human development. Lack of trust in the wider environment, whether near neighbour or distant trading partner, impedes economic growth.

The Secretary-General in his report calls for substantial and sustainable economic growth and social development. His report on the implementation of the recommendations certainly indicates that a great many multilateral and bilateral efforts have been launched over the years. Inputs have been substantial, but whether they have been instrumental in creating sustainable economic growth and human development is not easily determined. Except in areas such as school attendance and child/mother mortality, where some progress indicators are available, no report or review provides a clear overview of whether the impact on economic growth and human development of each effort has been positive.

We appreciate the good work done by the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group in monitoring the implementation of recommendations, but it is not surprising that it has found the job daunting. We have endorsed Chairman Holkeri's suggestion that the Working Group format is not the most effective tool and that it take a one-year time out to take advantage of the review and appraisal of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. We will work with our colleagues to ensure that monitoring continues on a regular and cost-effective basis if the General Assembly agrees that the already-established Interdepartmental/Inter-Agency Task Force should be the focal point for monitoring the implementation of the recommendations. Additional human resources should be seconded from other African initiatives, such as the special unit on Africa.

In the context of the comprehensive New Partnership for Africa's Development and with a view

to reducing the number of overlapping initiatives, we ask that the Secretary-General consider recommending that several initiatives slated for review and appraisal, such as the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s and the Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa, not be renewed. The recent international focus on Africa, welcome as it is, has created numerous development initiatives. We share the Secretary-General's concern that the proliferation of such initiatives results in the duplication of effort and the diffusion of resources.

We commend African leaders for the work that has gone into the creation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development. We support the concept of an African-led plan for sustainable development that would include among its core goals conflict resolution, good governance, economic growth and sound economic management. We are prepared to work with African nations and the Organization of African Unity to implement these goals and we look forward to a working relationship in the future.

Mr. Amer (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): In 1998, the Secretary-General issued his report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. In that document, he made a number of recommendations to address issues ranging from post-conflict peace-building to the mobilization of resources for development, as well as a comprehensive and integrated programme for conflict prevention, the eradication of poverty and the realization of development.

It is a source of satisfaction to us that, three years later, the report continues to attract much interest in the international community and the United Nations. The General Assembly has established the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa to monitor the implementation of the Secretary-General's recommendations and to assess the obstacles hindering it and ways to overcome them. The Security Council and many other international bodies, including the Economic and Social Council, have taken up the report.

I wish on this occasion to express my appreciation to all those bodies for their consideration of the economic, social and political causes of conflict in Africa. I wish to pay a special tribute to the Secretary-General, who has always supported African efforts for peace and development. He has dispatched envoys, called for the mobilization of resources for post-conflict peace-building and encouraged African organizations to intervene in conflicts and settle them.

As we discuss the situation in Africa, many facts highlight the successful efforts of African countries to settle disputes on the continent and to extinguish the fires of war in many States. We can point to success stories in Sierra Leone, Somalia and Burundi and there is much hope for the restoration of peace and national reconciliation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development adopted in July shows the commitment of African leaders to establishing conflict prevention, management and settlement mechanisms, to achieving democracy and to defending human rights. Furthermore, the foundation of the African Union opens a new chapter in Africa's history and will lead to the building of a united continent of peace in which every effort is made to achieve economic and social development for the sons of Africa in all its regions.

We in Libya, having contributed to all these achievements, must again stress that the growing role of Africa does not exempt the international community from its responsibility to help the continent to overcome its difficulties and to promote its capacities. Former colonial Powers have essential obligations in that regard. They invaded Africa and divided it into States through treaties signed among themselves. They divided its tribes and communities, leading to political instability in many regions and to an economic backwardness throughout the continent. The least those Powers can do is to apologize to the Africans and to compensate them for psychological harm and for pillaging their wealth for centuries.

While welcoming the importance being given to African issues in international bodies, my delegation believes that the proof will be in the concrete measures taken to promote Africa's efforts to achieve peace and to end the conflicts taking place in some of its regions, which continue to damage economic and social infrastructures. In order to face up to these situations, it is very important to improve early warning mechanisms, deal with the problems related to the illicit trade in weapons, encourage regional and subregional African organizations to find peaceful

settlements to disputes and promote their capabilities to prevent the eruption of new conflicts.

The causes of conflict are numerous and multifaceted. Poverty is an essential element in most conflicts, and must be taken into consideration in Africa. Three hundred million people on the African continent live on less than $1 per day. A strategic pillar of sustainable development consists of raising Africans' standard of living and attaining the goal of reducing Africa's poverty rate by half by 2015. This means that the international community must give the utmost priority to African efforts for economic growth that would reduce poverty. In this regard, it is important to alleviate the external debt burden, which is a problem in most States of the continent. It is also important to assist Africa to diversify its export products, eliminate customs tariffs on African products and help it effectively to join the international trading system by opening doors to its exports in international markets. Moreover, the trend in official development assistance must be reversed and the target of allocating 0.7 per cent of developed countries' gross national product to official development assistance must be reached.

In the report contained in document A/56/45, the Working Group sets out a number of recommendations to promote education in Africa, as education is central to preventing conflict, promoting peace and preventing the spread of disease. My delegation is convinced that the deteriorating state of education in Africa is one of the reasons for the slow pace of sustainable economic growth on the continent. We support the Working Group's recommendations in this regard. We would like to stress that the international community must support Africa's efforts to attain gender parity and make education available to everyone by 2015, as well as its efforts in information and communications technology.

It has become very clear that public health issues, and problems related to AIDS in particular, are no longer mere medical issues. The economic and social repercussions of AIDS are numerous and very serious. This disease threatens millions of people in Africa and has shown itself to be a threat to sustainable development. African States are aware of the dangers of this lethal disease and have met at the summit level to develop measures to deal with it. Those measures include the establishment of the African research centre on controlling communicable diseases, whose expenses Colonel Muammar Al-Qadhafi has offered to cover in large part. We hope that this initiative will encourage others to follow suit.

In that regard, it is commendable that the United Nations has made the struggle against AIDS a major component of its programmes. The General Assembly has met in special session to consider this issue; the International Atomic Energy Agency is making efforts to modernize diagnosis of the disease; and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations have had numerous successes in this area.

We believe that AIDS is a threat to be confronted by States, pharmaceutical companies and international organizations, including international financial organizations. We also believe that the cost of drugs is unreasonable. The disease cannot wait for solutions to this issue; drugs must be provided at reasonable cost or at no cost for those who cannot afford them.

In conclusion, my delegation agrees with the proposals of the Working Group contained in the last part of its report, entitled "Need for follow-up". We look forward to the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, when the Working Group will take up its mandate anew. Finally, I cannot fail to express my delegation's appreciation for the work done by the Working Group last year, especially the work done by the Chairman and his two Vice-Chairmen, from Pakistan and Spain, who contributed greatly to the success of the Working Group's activities.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.

United Nations A/56/PV.74

General Assembly

Official Records

Fifty-sixth session

74th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 4 December 2001, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo ..... (Republic of Korea)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Kumalo (South Africa), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 48 (*continued*)

Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa

Report of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa (A/56/45)

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/371)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.28)

Mr. Rivas (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Colombia appreciates the opportunity to participate in the debate on the implementation of the recommendations that the Secretary-General presented to the Assembly three years ago in his report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of development in Africa.

We wish to express our gratitude to the Ambassadors of Spain and Pakistan for guiding so well the activities of the Working Group during the last three months and to the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries for the support it has offered. We also noted with satisfaction the efforts of the Secretariat to make available to the public through the United Nations Internet portal the ample information existing in the Organization on programmes focusing on Africa.

United Nations efforts for Africa in the areas of education, conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building — the object of our examination this year — have produced positive though insufficient results considering the great challenges for peace and development that the continent faces.

That appears to be the main conclusion of the Working Group, and we agree with it. However, we find it discouraging that the attention given to Africa in the various organs, funds and programmes of the United Nations has not functioned in a way that more decisively supports peace and development on the continent.

This year, in addition to the deliberations in the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council dealt with the problems of sustainable development at its ministerial-level segment. The Security Council has also followed closely the performance of various peace missions in the region. Its members visited the Democratic Republic of the Congo and neighbouring countries and had various meetings at the ministerial level in New York with the signatories of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement and the Arusha Peace Agreement.

The delegation of Colombia, as a member of the Security Council, has had the satisfaction of contributing to the Council's efforts and has promoted

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greater cooperation with existing regional organizations in Africa. Last August, during our presidency of the Council, we promoted an examination of the regional approach to conflict management in Africa, in response to the findings of the United Nations Inter-Agency Mission to West Africa, headed by Mr. Ibrahima Fall, the Secretary-General's representative. We believe that the views expressed at the meeting on that subject can contribute to the management of conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building in Africa.

Allow me to express some views that are widely shared on the regional approach. First, the regional approach must be seen as a complement to and not a replacement for national or global efforts in conflict management. Secondly, the success of the regional focus depends, inter alia, on the main protagonists being in agreement on the definition of the region and having a positive perception of the role of external actors. Thirdly, the differing perceptions among the regional and external actors, including the Security Council, may limit the effective management of prevention, peacekeeping or peace-building activities. Fourthly, despite the usefulness of regional efforts, respect for the sovereignty of each country must continue to guide the external actors.

That said, my delegation is pleased with the decision adopted by the Secretary-General to establish a United Nations Office in West Africa, with headquarters in Dakar, for an initial period of three years. We consider to be important its objective of promoting a regional strategy for dealing with the problems relating to peace and development, in close cooperation with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), with emphasis on conflict prevention and peace-building in countries that are emerging from a conflict.

In this connection, we should welcome the ECOWAS decision taken last July to extend, for a new three-year period, the Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa. This is a measure that, if supported by the main arms-exporting countries in the world, could have a favourable impact on peace and development throughout the region. We are aware that there are similar initiatives being undertaken in other regions on the continent, in particular by the countries of the Southern African Development Community and in the Horn of Africa.

It is obvious to my delegation that the African countries themselves should provide orientation for efforts to create a favourable environment for peace and development. This is part of the process of shouldering the responsibility for their own destiny, as all peoples have done once they have freed themselves from colonialism — in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean alike.

We are therefore pleased with the decision adopted by the African countries during the thirty-seventh Summit of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), held in July in Zambia, to establish the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). In addition, we support the appeals for the United Nations to respond more efficiently and in a more coordinated manner to the hopes expressed by the New Partnership and for it to consider the possibility of convening a special session of the General Assembly on options for continued solidarity with and support for the African continent.

We believe that the United Nations is in a very good position to focus the attention of the international community on the needs for peace and development in Africa, and to work on an agreed basis with regional organizations on the continent and assist countries in strengthening their Governments' own management capacity, with the broad participation of African civil society organizations.

My delegation supports the terms of the draft resolution before us this year regarding the implementation of the recommendations made by the Secretary-General to the Assembly in 1998. We feel it is appropriate to suspend the deliberations of the Working Group in order to provide time for next year's assessment of the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. Our commitment to peace and development in Africa will remain unwavering.

Mr. Mársico (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): First, we would like to thank Foreign Minister Holkeri of Finland for drafting the report of the Working Group, and the two Vice-Chairmen, the Permanent Representatives of Spain and Pakistan, for their efficient work. We would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his report.

We agree with the basic premise of both reports: that there is a link between peace and development. We believe that that relationship is essential, because there

will not be durable peace in Africa until the minimum conditions for sustainable development exist. Today we would like to emphasize the relationship between conflict prevention and development in Africa. In our view, prevention means more than simply the absence of armed conflict. It is related to a people's possibility of economic, educational and human development.

The prevention of armed conflicts is the primary responsibility of the Security Council. Exercising that responsibility is not an easy task. It requires human and financial resources and political will. When all those elements have existed the Council has been able to act efficiently and to establish, for example, a preventive peacekeeping operation in the Central African Republic. When one of those elements was missing — in particular, the political will to act — then genocide occurred in Rwanda.

We also believe that if there had been sufficient political will, the effects of some African conflicts could have been limited through the application of an arms embargo in their initial stages.

In addition to those fundamental elements, we believe that there are specific instruments to aid in preventing conflict. The Security Council must have information on what is happening in the field. Otherwise, early warning systems will not function properly. In the case of Sierra Leone in May 2000, the lack of intelligence brought about a delicate situation for the safety of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone staff.

The Council needs to be closely acquainted with the political, economic, social and ethnic causes of conflicts under its consideration. For that to occur, we believe that close cooperation is required between the Secretariat, the Council and African regional and subregional organizations, through a regular exchange of information and visits at both the technical and political levels. We believe that concrete progress has been made in the past two years. The meetings held in 2001 by the Council with the Lusaka Political Committee on the situation in the Great Lakes region or with the Economic Community of West African States on Sierra Leone signal a trend of positive rapprochement. Security Council missions to the countries affected by conflict have shown themselves to be a useful tool, as demonstrated by the Security Council mission to the Great Lakes region last May.

The International Tribunals are another prevention element. They create awareness of the fact that crimes against humanity, such as the genocide in Rwanda or the atrocities committed by the Revolutionary United Front in Sierra Leone, will not go unpunished. In this regard, we note with concern that the tribunal on Sierra Leone cannot be put into operation owing to a lack of funds, despite the pledges made. In that context, we also believe that the entry into force of the Rome Statute, which establishes the International Criminal Court, will be an important deterrent.

Conflict prevention is not the exclusive responsibility of the Security Council. Given the overwhelmingly intra-State nature of African conflicts in the post-cold-war era, the Security Council's work would benefit from greater cooperation with the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. African regional and subregional organizations also play an important role in conflict prevention and resolution. They are not always in a financial or technical position to carry out that responsibility, even when the political will exists. That is why they require the support of the United Nations and the donor community. In this context, we believe that cooperation opportunities within the context of Chapter VIII of the Charter should be further explored and exploited.

We live in a world of contradictions. Integration and globalization coexist with fragmentation and marginalization. The unprecedented economic prosperity of recent years coexists with extreme poverty in some areas of Africa, as well as in other parts of the world. One fifth of mankind is forced to survive on only $1 per day. Despite that, official development assistance has steadily decreased. We believe that it should be increased. We also believe that support should not be limited to official development assistance. It should also be translated into trade liberalization, which would enable greater international participation by the African countries in world trade. Tariff barriers take on new forms, such as the establishment of labour and environmental standards and "anti-dumping" measures, sending a discouraging signal to African countries that are making considerable efforts to modernize their economies and win new export markets.

Argentina has always been present in Africa. Since the beginning, we have supported the

decolonization process of the continent and the struggle against apartheid. In recent years we have strengthened our political relationship and have expanded our cultural and trade relationship.

We have participated in peacekeeping operations in Angola and Mozambique, the electoral monitoring processes in the first free election in South Africa, the legislative elections in Algeria in 1997 and the referendum on self-determination in Eritrea in 1993. We are currently participating in the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara, and very recently we sent civilian police to the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Argentina lends humanitarian assistance directly or through the White Helmets and promotes development cooperation through cooperation funds. Likewise, in the framework of the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic, which groups three Latin American countries with 21 African countries, and which Argentina has coordinated since 1998, a series of initiatives aimed at expanding cooperation between its members has been proposed.

We hope that this tendency towards dialogue, which is mutually beneficial, will be expanded even more in the future.

Mr. Dos Santos (Mozambique): In addressing the General Assembly on agenda item 48, I wish to commend the positive monitoring work done by the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa.

We welcome the progress report, contained in document A/56/371, on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa.

The report describes the specific follow-up action that has been initiated in the areas of peacemaking, peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building. It presents a broad view of recent developments in the area of governance and sustainable development, as well as underscores the need for the international community to support the efforts of African countries to develop and sustain their economies.

At the Millennium Summit last year, heads of State and Government resolved,

> "To make the United Nations more effective in maintaining peace and security by giving it the resources and tools it needs for conflict prevention, peaceful resolution of disputes, peacekeeping, post-conflict peace-building and reconstruction." (*A/RES/55/2, para. 9*)

There is a nexus between peace and development. Long-term conflict prevention demands commitment that goes beyond short-term military support. We are encouraged to note that the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa highlights this nexus and advances a comprehensive and integrated approach to conflict prevention, poverty eradication and development. We are hopeful that this approach will help meet the special needs of many African countries.

In the same vein, the prevention of conflicts should aim at addressing their root causes, including poverty, hunger, epidemic diseases and underdevelopment. To this end, the external debt of heavily indebted poor countries must be cancelled, levels of official development assistance and foreign direct investment must be increased and market access to products from developing countries must be allowed.

States and the international community at large should vigorously engage in the promotion of a culture of peace and greater cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts; assistance to reconstruction efforts in post-conflict situations; strengthening efforts to eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons by implementing, at all levels, the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects; as well as in the implementation of the recommendations of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations.

The United Nations must also increase its support for Africa's own peace and development initiatives. African countries have continued their efforts to build African capacity for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts and for development. The first African ministerial conference on security, stability, development in Africa, held at Abuja, Nigeria, in May

2000, proposed a plan of action and implementation for such an endeavour.

At the subregional level, and as a way to tackle the root causes of conflicts, we in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) are committed to efforts to eradicate poverty, to combat HIV/AIDS and to better respond to challenges posed by globalization. In SADC we are also strongly engaged in activities aimed at tackling conflicts in our subregion. The SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security, currently chaired by Mozambique, is sparing no effort to promote peace and security through own-grown conflict prevention and resolution initiatives. Other subregions in the continent are undertaking similar initiatives.

We therefore urge the United Nations, the international community as a whole and international financial and economic institutions to support African development initiatives, especially the New Partnership for Africa's Development. The Partnership aims to set an agenda for the renewal of the African continent based on national and regional priorities and development plans prepared through a participatory process. It foresees a new framework of interaction with the rest of the world, including the industrialized countries and multilateral organizations. It builds on the wealth of experience thus far accumulated by Africa and its partners.

African leaders and their peoples are fully conscious of their primary responsibility for promoting peace, stability and development in the continent. What they require is adequate and timely assistance. As stated by our Foreign Minister during the general debate, at the national level the Government of Mozambique has approved a poverty reduction strategy plan for the period 2001 to 2005, whose strategic vision is founded in two imperatives: the need to maintain peace and stability in the country and the need for rapid, sustained and broad-based growth where private initiative plays an important role. Moreover, the Government of Mozambique has launched a national debate on a long-term strategy — Agenda 2025 — which is based on constructive dialogue on the future of Mozambique. The Agenda is aimed at creating, through a participatory and inclusive process, a national strategic vision for development, as well as at strengthening the ability of Government and of civil society to define and implement national policies and projects.

In order to combat HIV/AIDS, the Government of Mozambique has adopted a three-year national strategic plan that focuses on prevention and on reduction of the impact of the disease. The plan places the human being at the centre of its action, and is directed at the vulnerable groups of society, including women, orphaned children and young people, particularly girls. In this end avour the Government has adopted a multisectoral approach with the active involvement of all stakeholders of our society.

These national policies, strategies, plans and programmes represent our modest but determined effort and contribution towards tackling the root causes of conflict and promoting durable peace and sustainable development in Mozambique, in southern Africa and throughout the continent. We wish to avail ourselves of this opportunity to reiterate our appreciation and gratitude to the United Nations and to all cooperating partners for their assistance.

Mr. Bennouna (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): I wish at the outset, on behalf of the Moroccan delegation, to congratulate the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, on his most useful report (A/56/371) on follow-up measures to implement the recommendations contained in his report (A/52/871) on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. I want also to convey heartfelt congratulations to the members of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on that question, and particularly to its two Vice-Chairmen, Mr. Shamshad Ahmad, Permanent Representative of Pakistan, and Mr. Inocencio Arias, Permanent Representative of Spain, who worked tirelessly to ensure the success of the Group's work.

Obviously, this is not the first statement by the Kingdom of Morocco on this issue. That reflects our very special interest in the question of the causes of conflict in Africa as it relates to development in our continent, and in the need to find a speedy solution to it within the United Nations.

The proliferation of debate, both within and outside the United Nations, on the tragic situation of the African continent and on how to rectify it is an indication of the extent and the gravity of the crisis the continent is enduring. Despite its enormous potential in terms of human and natural resources, Africa continues to be a stricken continent ravaged by increasingly

complex and bloody conflict, which jeopardizes its stability and its economic and social development.

There is thus an interaction between the persistence of conflict and economic stagnation in Africa; that interaction was rightly a focus of the comprehensive recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his 1998 report, which we consider to remain entirely relevant. Morocco attaches great importance to those recommendations; we consider that a comprehensive, integrated approach is needed for their implementation.

Creating a structure within the United Nations system would probably be the best way to foster and implement that approach. Such a structure would aim to ensure the implementation of the recommendations set out in the report of the Secretary-General, along with follow-up and assessment of the progress made by United Nations bodies in that regard.

The study of the causes of conflict already exists; it has been done in various reports that have been submitted either by the Secretary-General or by groups of experts on one conflict or another which the Security Council in particular is dealing with. In this way, in many conflicts, from Sierra Leone to Angola to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we have ascertained the extent to which the exploitation of natural resources in certain areas beyond the control of the central Government is fuelling civil wars and armed confrontations.

In this respect, we feel that the coordination of efforts on the part of the international community within a suitable structure would be really appropriate. And why? First, because until now in Africa, we have become accustomed to reason country by country, conflict by conflict, whereas the transnational groups of traffickers operate on a broad scale, on a continental level, and sometimes on a global level without taking borders into account. Therefore, it is important that all measures be taken, within a framework of international legality, so that the nationals of third countries cannot benefit from the chaos or anarchy that has been created in one African region or another in order to subjugate African populations for purely mercenary purposes.

Together with the measures that address the causes of conflict, be they preventive or therapeutic, we certainly need to strengthen the peacekeeping mechanisms through close cooperation with the African countries concerned. The Kingdom of Morocco considers that the relations being established between the troop-contributing countries and the Security Council members, as well as those supplying logistical support, favour the establishment of an effective partnership in terms of peacekeeping. We are actively participating in the meetings as a troop-contributing country.

Moreover, it is vital that the United Nations adopt concrete measures to guarantee the strictest possible respect on the part of the parties to the conflict for norms of international humanitarian law — norms which, it must be remembered, are peremptory and mandatory for all sides, even going beyond accession to one international convention or another.

Of course, in addition to foreign intervention, among the causes of conflict today are, unfortunately, suppression or all kinds of harassment among ethnic and cultural groups, which seek to gain support through ethnic diversity in neighbouring countries to stir up separatist conflicts.

In the framework of post-conflict peace-building, our country highly commends the setting up of a support structure and encourages the subregional integrated approach, whether it be in West, Central or Southern Africa, by developing cooperation among the global and the subregional organizations concerned, as was done successfully in West Africa.

We welcome the creation of a United Nations office in West Africa, the mandate of which will be to strengthen the United Nations capacity in monitoring, rapid warning and conflict prevention, and which will help in particular to coordinate from the headquarters — which, according to our knowledge, will be in Dakar — all the support for efforts and activities for consolidating peace in the West African subregion. We support this initiative for a United Nations office in Dakar, and we will contribute at the appropriate time to its success in order to allow our brothers from West Africa to recover their stability. This will allow them to devote themselves fully to economic development and fully meet the vital needs of their peoples.

Morocco is convinced that democracy and good governance are the common objectives for all Africans, but these objectives depend on the return to peace and the guarantee of security to the societies concerned. Security is the key to freedom.

My country is also convinced that achieving durable peace and real economic growth in Africa depends not only on the moral and financial commitment of the African Governments, but also on the creation of an environment favourable to investment, to economic growth, to the restructuring of international aid, to the reduction of the debt burden, to the opening of international markets and to the creation of small and medium-sized businesses. Concerted action on the part of the international community and international financial institutions is absolutely vital in order that significant progress be made on all these issues. Of course, we have been mentioning these issues for several years, and we are expecting significant steps to be taken soon.

In conclusion, Morocco, as an African country which faces Europe — when I say faces, that means we see Europe from Tangiers — has historically been at the crossroads of differing cultures and civilizations, including Arab, African and European. Morocco is striving to deepen its relations with the regions to the north and south of the Sahara. To do so, my country is striving to develop all the necessary infrastructure and all appropriate institutions in order to promote and develop exchange between the regions north and south of the Sahara and, going beyond that, between the African continent and Europe. We are convinced that the development of these exchanges is the best means of ensuring peace and of overcoming all artificial opposition here and there that could generate into disastrous conflicts.

Mr. Guani (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): The promotion of lasting peace and sustainable development in Africa are of particular importance to Uruguay, especially in the southern and western parts of the continent, given their geographic proximity to countries whose coastline, like Uruguay's, is located on the other side of the South Atlantic. However, that proximity has not been translated into close neighbourly relations, which could make better use of their potential.

While we do have fledgling relations with many African countries, we wish further to strengthen those ties and to make the most of the considerable possibilities for cooperation with our African neighbours. One of the factors that has hindered the development of our relations is the existence of conflicts, which in some cases have a regional impact and whose resolution is, of course, in the hands of our African brothers.

However, we are aware that countries outside the region can contribute greatly to the consolidation of peace in Africa. Uruguay has had a significant presence in the 20-odd peacekeeping operations that this Organization has established so far in Africa, in particular in Angola, Western Sahara, Mozambique, Sierra Leone and, more recently, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We have made that contribution without selfish designs, motivated solely by our nation's deep-seated sense of humanity and solidarity, our long-standing democratic tradition and our unswerving respect for human rights.

There is consensus among the international community that peace, democracy and good governance are prerequisites for achieving sustainable development in Africa and that we need to devise general and integrated strategies to deal with the root causes of conflicts, including their economic and social dimensions.

Let me recall that the Secretary-General, in his report on the implementation of recommendations related to the causes of conflict in Africa, prepared in accordance with resolution 55/217, appeals to the international community to support the work of the African countries in carrying out reforms based on advances in the areas of public management and of sustainable development.

We are pleased that the Open-ended Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa has focused its attention on conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building, as well as on education as a key factor in the achievement of durable peace and sustainable development. This will contribute to averting clashes, which can sometimes go on for years, leaving in their wake a trail of death and societal breakdown.

Poverty in Africa is jeopardizing not only efforts towards peace and development in that continent, but also, and above all, security through the world. Can anyone really believe that, on a planet made ever smaller by technological advances, information and communications, an increasingly rich minority can coexist peacefully with an increasingly poor and marginalized majority? Concerning the fight against HIV/AIDS in Africa, we deem extremely

important the fact that the Secretary-General has personally met with the highest-level officials of six multinational pharmaceutical companies to discuss additional measures they could take in order to make care and treatment more accessible to individuals living with HIV/AIDS. The cost of medication for poor countries ultimately marginalizes even further those who do not have access to treatments that are commonplace in the developed countries.

We hope that the efforts of our African brothers and of the international community will be able to overcome the problems facing this continent. Only then will we be able to focus our attention on political, economic and cultural relations and on cooperation.

I wish to recall here that the Afro-Latin American Institute is based in Montevideo and that we believe it to be the most appropriate forum for revitalizing relations between Latin America and Africa.

Finally, we hope that the International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in Monterrey, Mexico, next March, will devote particular attention to Africa's needs.

Mr. Tekle (Eritrea): Allow me to begin my statement by thanking the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations contained in his report of April 1998 on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. I also wish to avail myself of this opportunity to thank the Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group for the report on this item.

The Eritrean delegation also welcomes the adoption by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Summit, held in Lusaka from 9 to 11 July 2001, of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

It has not been unusual recently to read, in academic literature on African politics, that Africa is definitely reverting to the conditions described in Joseph Conrad's novel *Heart of Darkness*. We are informed by highly respected Africanist scholars that, in fact, there is nothing abnormal or extraordinary in such a regression, since it only constitutes a return to the "normalcy of a very long history of conflict and warfare" that was briefly interrupted by a colonial Pax Britannica, or *la paix coloniale*, which were able briefly to control but not totally to eliminate it. We are told that the re-emergence of a Hobbesian state of war as a dominant form of state formation, rather than destruction, is natural, and that the deliberate manufacturing of disorder, confusion and insecurity and the legitimization of crime by African leaders to maximize their control of power is only logical.

In short, they are saying that war is a natural condition of African political economy that we must accept and to which we must become accustomed. We are then told that, since these conditions cannot create a favourable environment for development, they can only perpetuate war and obstruct any possible creation of the legal, administrative and institutional foundations essential for development.

It is quite easy to refute the absurd theoretical assumptions and historical fallacies underlying any such scholarship of doom by the Afro-pessimists. Indeed, while it is true that absolute poverty and deprivation, as well as widespread disease, ignorance, malnutrition and homelessness, have ravaged the continent on a scale which is unacceptable in the twenty-first century, developments over the last decade augur well for Africa, since they demonstrate that, by and large, Africans have rejected the "criminalization of the state" or the "instrumentalization of disorder" in favour of a new development-oriented and participatory state — hence, NEPAD.

Yet all is not well. There is still some cause for concern, if only because of the continued erosion of the State and the proliferation of armed conflict in some parts of the continent. These have been detrimental to more orderly transitions to democratic governance and development.

The legacy of colonialism has, in fact, been the primary source of conflict in the continent. Ethnic conflicts, as well as wars related to territory in some regions of the continent, can be directly linked to the legacy of colonialism. While territorial conflicts have essentially been between States, ethnic conflicts have taken place within States. However, inter-State conflicts have, on occasion, escalated to such a level that they have caused massive intervention by other, usually neighbouring, States. This has resulted in major regional conflicts, involving several countries in Central and West Africa. Furthermore, some States have blatantly violated the territorial integrity of their neighbours — ostensibly because they have felt threatened, but often because they desire to act as

regional policemen. Such intervention, particularly in the Horn of Africa, consisting of a State's involvement in a civil war — either directly, by armed intervention, or indirectly, by actively supporting a faction, as well as hosting, training, arming and financing terrorist insurgents — has been dangerous, primarily because it has provoked counter-intervention. It is also, in the end, self-defeating.

Violations of international law due to irredentism and the blatant intervention by a State or group of States in a third country in support of one faction or its antagonists have been closely linked to cupidity with regard to a territory or its resources — mines, fertile land, ports and so forth — or to presumed special interests in that country. This must be considered unacceptable since, by undermining the standards, principles, values and conventions that have promoted and protected regional and international peace, security and stability, it may lead us to the chaos and disorder that has been prophesied by the scholars of doom and despair.

While it is true that colonialism is a source of our problems, we can no longer legitimately blame it as the sole agent for our problems, if only because these problems could have been solved on the basis of available legal instruments and procedures at the regional and international level. It is for this reason that we must, ourselves, undertake a critical self-analysis. It is the considered view of the Eritrean delegation that the lack of broadly defined human security, good governance and access to and equitable distribution of resources within States, as well as the violation of international law at the international level, are the roots of all our predicaments.

Good governance, which emphasizes not only representative but also participatory democracy, and democracy, which encompasses developmental as well as political aspects, are the sine qua non for the promotion and protection of equality of condition, in addition to equality of opportunity. Only with the materialization of such a democracy, ensuring effective control of the public agenda at the grass-roots level and, thus, a human-centred development programme, can we build a just social order which addresses the material and spiritual needs of our population. In other words, if there is no democratic development, there will be no security, no stability and no peace.

In this connection, it must be noted that, in spite of the end of the cold war, the promotion of democracy and good governance still continues to be a function of the national interests of States; thus, the most democratic of States have often been supportive of the most undemocratic Governments. Also, it seems obvious that, in an interdependent world, the democratization of international relations is as vital as the democratization of national affairs for our mutual benefit and for safeguarding peace, security and stability.

To this end, the rich countries must make an earnest effort, collectively and individually, on the basis of their commitments undertaken at the Millennium Summit, to help Africa to meet the challenges of globalization by turning it into a positive force for development and the reduction of disparities, as well as for the creation of just and equitable economic relationships. They should also address issues related to official development assistance and foreign direct investment; we thank them for the measures they have taken regarding debt relief, in particular the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative.

Needless to say, Africans must also respond by accelerating their economic reform programmes, as well as by ensuring a salubrious environment for stimulating savings, preventing the flight of capital and attracting investment.

Conflict and war have been very costly to Africa. Hundreds of thousands have died because of civil and inter-State or regional wars, which has drastically affected human capital; still others have died of famine, starvation and epidemics directly linked to war. Conflict and war cause displacement and migration. They often result in ecological disaster and drain resources. The massive purchase of armaments and the hiring of foreign mercenaries divert resources much needed for education, health and other social services, as well as from development projects. They destroy normal trade relations and not only cost the international community a great deal in donations but also create a culture of dependency. Moreover, they also make routine governance extremely difficult.

Thus, it behoves us to endorse the suggestions for further action made in the reports of both the Secretary-General and the Open-ended Ad Hoc

Working Group, especially those related to education, conflict resolution and post-conflict peace-building.

Nowadays, the mandates of peacekeeping operations are being broadened to meet new problems and challenges. Thus, in addition to coping with the traditional functions of preventing conflict, peacekeeping operations must now address challenges spawned by post-conflict situations such as, inter alia, nation-building, the protection of human rights, respect for international humanitarian law, the resettlement of displaced persons, demining and the demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants.

For this reason, the Eritrean delegation endorses the recommendations of the Secretary-General concerning preventive diplomacy, preventive deployment and preventive disarmament in peacekeeping. The implementation of the recommendations by all can prevent the start or escalation of conflict and avert the loss of life and destruction of property.

The Eritrean delegation also believes that there is a need for a paradigm shift from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention. In this connection, the need for an early warning system becomes obvious. On the other hand, it would be an admission of humanity's collective inability to solve its problems if peacekeeping operations were to be regarded as a permanent feature of international relations. They are not — and must not be — an end in themselves.

Once conflicts take place, it becomes essential for the international community to take urgent measures to manage them through subregional or regional organizations and, inevitably, the United Nations. It is not right that conflicts should deteriorate to the extent that they cause unnecessary destruction of lives and property, when the United Nations, in particular, is able to take effective action through its conflict resolution mechanisms and procedures. However, we must also realize that international and regional organizations can help only those who help themselves.

The Eritrean delegation readily acknowledges the role that regional organizations can play in peacekeeping operations when they establish a cooperative relationship with the United Nations. On the other hand, this does not and cannot mean that regional organizations can ever substitute for, rather than cooperate with, the United Nations. Nor can the United Nations, whose Security Council is mandated with the maintenance of international peace and security, justifiably shirk its responsibility by passing that responsibility off to regional organizations. Any such attempt will not only be in violation of the Charter of the United Nations but also undermine confidence in the United Nations. This is applicable to Africa and the OAU, as it is to other regions and regional organizations.

Mr. Gatilov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation considers the strengthening of peace, security and stability in Africa to be a vital component of efforts to establish a balanced and predictable world order through the creation of an integrated and stable system of international security based on the Charter of the United Nations.

In spite of the important progress achieved in the past year, we continue to be concerned about the ongoing tension in Africa. In a number of countries, armed conflicts persist that frequently cross borders and destabilize entire regions. We share the view of the Secretary-General that a link exists between peace and development. Russia favours a comprehensive approach to settlement and prevention of conflicts, eradication of poverty, the promotion of development and the strengthening of democracy on the African continent. We are convinced that if we do not break the vicious circle of insufficient development, social and inter-ethnic problems and political and military instability, conflicts and failing development programmes, the countries of Africa will not be able to embark on the path of sustainable and dynamic development or be fully integrated into the world economy.

We welcome the increased efforts on the part of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the subregional organizations in Africa to prevent and settle conflict situations, showing the readiness and determination of Africans to play an appropriate and key role in the solutions to these problems. We commend the efforts of the OAU in promoting sustainable development, encouraging the States on the African continent to embrace economic and political change and strengthening regional and subregional integration.

The OAU summit in Lusaka was an important step forward for the integration processes in Africa, and the decision to begin forming an African Union

structure is giving new impetus to multi-level regional cooperation. We consider the New African Initiative adopted at the summit a strategic programme that will move Africa forward towards progress and mutually beneficial cooperation.

Russia agrees with many of the approaches outlined in the report, in particular with respect to the risks of globalization and the negative impact of conflicts on the implementation of development programmes. We support the argument that global partnership should be based on mutual interests and the main responsibility for conflict settlement and development of the continent lies with the African Governments themselves. At the last Group of Eight Summit, Russia supported the Genoa plan for Africa aimed at working out concrete proposals with regard to the implementation of key provisions of the New African Initiative.

At the same time, efforts along these lines on the part of African countries should be supported by the authority and capacities of the United Nations. We are pleased to note the increased cooperation of the United Nations with the OAU and with such subregional organizations as the Economic Community of West African States, the Southern African Development Community and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development.

This cooperation allows us to focus international efforts on solving the most urgent problems and coordinating peaceful initiatives, which in a number of cases have already made an important contribution to the settlement of conflicts. Russia supports the efforts being carried out by the United Nations to strengthen the peace-building potential of Africa through staff training, exchange of information, joint study and demining programmes and also, within the context of the United Nations Standby Arrangements System, the establishment of an effective cooperative peacekeeping partnership.

Development assistance is an important component of international efforts aimed at promoting peace and avoiding conflict on the African continent. This area holds the key to the preventive potential of the socio-economic and humanitarian sector of the United Nations. The operational programmes and funds of the Organization can play a significant role in monitoring and analysing the structural risk factors for the emergence of conflicts in Africa. Their agendas should include such objectives as more equitable distribution of resources, elimination of discrimination and inequality among certain groups and more effective administration of justice.

We need to strive for the effective implementation of comprehensive United Nations programmes in Africa, combining, on the one hand, demining, measures to eliminate small arms and the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants and, on the other, the strengthening of democratic institutions, support for socio-economic reforms, the strengthening of national management institutions and strengthening the rule of law.

At the post-conflict reconstruction stage in African countries, it is most important to focus on avoiding the re-emergence of crises, mainly by providing for an effective link of emergency assistance with appropriate measures to support long-term sustainable development and social integration of the most vulnerable population groups. In addition, it is necessary to prepare and implement special measures to eradicate poverty, including initiatives aimed at reducing foreign debt, improving market access and increasing the amount of official assistance for development purposes, increasing direct foreign investment and the transfer of technology.

An important task is to strengthen the fight against HIV/AIDS and other dangerous infectious diseases on both the national and international levels. Along with maximum effectiveness of these efforts, it is necessary to strive for greater agreement among all participants, including within the United Nations system, national bodies, the Bretton Woods institutions, bilateral donors and regional and non-governmental organizations. We support the proposal to establish a special consultative group on the problems of countries that have experienced conflict and are ready to consider with great attention the current proposals of the Secretary-General.

The Russian Federation respects its traditional friendly ties with Africa and is taking consistent steps to orient its foreign policy towards Africa. In addition to our activities within the United Nations, we are working on various ways of expanding our practical participation in the strengthening of Africa's peace-building potential, primarily through such areas as transport, technical assistance for humanitarian work and the training of rescue and peacekeeping workers.

Understanding the concern of many African countries about the problem of unexploded mines, we are to render expert demining services. Moreover, we believe that we must comprehensively expand and develop our positive experience of multilateral cooperation with the African continent and are open to any proposals for joint projects that could make use of Russia's technical and intellectual potential.

We are striving to assist African countries in resolving the most topical problems in the sphere of development: alleviating the debt burden, preparing national cadres and improving access of African goods to the world markets. We are convinced that the way to stabilize the situation in Africa, settle the ongoing and avert future conflicts, and strengthen democracy in African countries is through the continent's integration into the world economy. For our part, we intend actively to participate in such work.

Mr. Zainuddin (Malaysia): My delegation is most grateful for the opportunity to deliberate on an issue of vital importance to the international community as a whole.

My delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's progress report, as contained in document A/56/371. The report has outlined specific follow-up action that has been initiated or completed in the areas of peace and security. It also contains a broad overview of recent developments in the areas of governance and sustainable development and of how the organizations of the United Nations system have responded in the implementation of the Secretary-General's recommendations made three year ago in 1999. My delegation also commends the comprehensive report of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group, which contains valuable suggestions for further action and measures to speed up the implementation of the recommendations. The report reaffirms that the implementation of the recommendations constitutes a priority that must remain high on the agendas of the United Nations system and of Member States. It also reaffirms that the General Assembly, as a chief deliberative, policy-making and representative organ of the United Nations, must continue to play the primary role in monitoring the implementation of the recommendations.

It is disheartening to note that Africa continues to be a theatre of wars and a home for poverty and disease, from the scourge of the Ebola fever that ravaged East Africa to the pandemic of HIV/AIDS that has swept across much of the continent. Conflicts, floods and low commodity prices have again held back Africa's economic growth, according to a report released by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. The report also indicates that those in conflict suffered negative growth and an alarming deterioration in basic conditions. While growth trends for the region as a whole remain depressed, some African countries are doing well. However, many countries are still vulnerable to conflict and external shocks in the world markets, such as the fallout from the East Asian crisis.

The Secretary-General in his report states that durable peace is a basic requirement for the economic and social progress of Africa. While recognizing the obvious interrelationship between peace and development, as fully described in the report of the Secretary-General, my delegation wishes to re-emphasize that there cannot be peace without development. It is an undeniable fact that economic and social problems are among the root causes of conflicts in Africa. The persistence of poverty impedes efforts for long-term peace and security. According to the latest data, some 300 million Africans live on barely 65 cents a day. Reducing poverty continues to be the biggest challenge for Africa and the mobilization of external resources is therefore urgent. Africa's ability to rise out of chronic poverty can be attained only with continued international assistance, without which many will remain entangled in the vicious cycle of poverty and violence. We concur with the Secretary-General that Africa will continue to rely on a strong and committed international partnership.

Of equal importance is the need to reduce Africa's debt burden, the greatest threat to Africa's survival, to more manageable levels, as many African countries are unable to meet their external debt-servicing obligations. The World Economic and Social Survey 2001 states that Africa owes the international community a total of $305.4 billion. The debt burdens of many African countries remain a pervasive obstacle to their capacity to reduce poverty and reach other development goals. My delegation is dismayed that the debt reduction packages of $34 billion for 19 countries in Africa announced by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have been lethargic in their implementation. We join the Secretary-General in urging creditor countries to consider converting into

grants all the remaining bilateral debts of the poorest African countries. We also urge the international financial institutions to ease significantly and quicken access to facilities for heavily indebted poor countries and to provide countries with sufficient resources. This is critical if Africa is to progress in the long term.

One of the contributing elements to violent conflict in Africa, as stated by the Secretary-General, is the rapid accumulation, illicit sale and indiscriminate use of small arms. My delegation supports the call of the Secretary-General for countries in the region to stop the proliferation of small arms in Africa. The Programme of Action adopted at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects in July this year is a significant step towards the goal of preventing, combating and eradicating such weapons. It is also important that bilateral and subregional security arrangements be strengthened to promote self-restraint in military expenditures and the acquisition of weapons in the region.

My delegation also believes that the issue of the proliferation of small arms must be viewed from a holistic perspective of arms control and disarmament, post-conflict peace-building, conflict prevention and socio-economic development. Adequate resources must be provided to ensure that the implementation of practical disarmament measures, including weapons collection projects and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes in Africa, are not hampered.

Efforts in post-conflict peace-building are also vital for ensuring sustainable and durable peace. A comprehensive and coherent response is needed to establish the preconditions for reconstruction and development. The Peace-building Support Offices established in the Central African Republic, Guinea-Bissau and Liberia could play an important role in post-conflict efforts for reintegration and reconciliation and in promoting a culture of peace. In carrying out those efforts, attention should be given to facilitating and encouraging gender mainstreaming and the participation of women, because, apart from being the most vulnerable and most affected group in conflict situations, they can play a very constructive and effective role in peace negotiations and post-conflict nation-building.

Creating a positive environment for investment and economic growth is important for achieving sustainable development in Africa. In that regard, my delegation concurs with the Secretary-General that investment in Africa, both domestic and foreign, needs to be substantially increased if the region is to accelerate growth to the level of 7 to 8 per cent, which is required in order to reduce poverty by half by 2015. While we recognize that political stability is a crucial factor in attracting foreign direct investment, it is disappointing to note that foreign direct investment inflows into Africa declined from $10.5 billion in 1999 to $9.1 billion in 2000. Such a situation, coupled with the consistent decline in the volume of official development assistance to developing countries will make it impossible for Africa to embark upon serious development programmes.

The *World Economic and Social Survey 2001* illustrated that official development assistance fell from $56.4 billion in 1999 to $53.1 billion in 2000, a decline of 6 per cent in nominal terms. Africa will be further marginalized if the current trends remain unchanged. We therefore urge developed countries to continue assisting African countries in a more sustained fashion in order to bring about growth and economic prosperity for a better future in the region. Equally important is the need to improve access for all goods from African countries to international markets through the reduction and elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers by the international community.

Last year our leaders pledged at the Millennium Summit to give special attention to meeting the special needs of Africa. They agreed to support the consolidation of democracy and to assist Africa in its struggle for lasting peace, poverty eradication and sustainable development. The international community must continue to assist African countries in their development needs. It is our earnest hope that the upcoming International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in Monterrey, Mexico, in March next year, will give particular attention to the special needs of Africa.

Malaysia greatly values its traditional friendly ties with Africa and will continue to actively participate in discussions on Africa. Malaysia, for its part, has been able to make a modest contribution through the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme, launched in 1981. To date, many participants from African countries have undergone

various short- and medium-term courses in Malaysia in the public administration and technical fields. We hope that such technical assistance has contributed to enhancing administrative capacity in some African countries, which is critical for enabling them to manage their own development. With that in mind, Malaysia remains committed to continuing to assist Africa through this Programme.

Malaysia has also developed economic relations with some African countries based on the concept of smart partnership, which involves Governments and the private sector, with the goal of promoting sound and sustainable economic activities to ensure a win-win relationship for all. Within our limited capabilities, Malaysia looks forward to further consolidating our cooperation and solidarity with Africa, in the spirit of South-South cooperation.

In conclusion, my delegation urges the international community, particularly the developed countries, to do more for Africa. We must work together with renewed vigour and in the spirit of partnership to rebuild Africa as a continent of promise and potential, one unified by peace, cooperation, economic progress and the rule of law. For their part, African countries must manifest the necessary political will to overcome their problems and to put the interests of their peoples first if they are to realize their vast potential. We welcome the commitment made by the African heads of State and Government to strengthen mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution, and to promote good governance and democracy by developing clear standards of accountability, transparency and participatory governance at the national and subnational levels.

Mr. Kamara (Sierra Leone): At the outset, let me, like those speakers who have preceded me, thank the Secretary-General for the comprehensive report contained in document A/56/371, detailing the progress of the implementation of the recommendations on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. My delegation is also appreciative of the efforts of the Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group, Ambassador Shamshad Ahmad of Pakistan and Ambassador Inocencio Arias of Spain. Their dedication and positive outlook culminated in the effective production of the Working Group's report.

The report of the Ad Hoc Working Group has provided us with an overview of the efforts made in implementing the recommendations on averting conflicts in general and on securing durable peace and sustainable development in post-conflict situations. It also provides us with a summary of major constraints or obstacles impeding the implementation of the Group's recommendations.

It is indeed sad to note that there are currently 17 ongoing conflicts in Africa, all varying in degree of violence and urgently needing resolution and management. Most of those conflict situations mirror long-festering ethnic, religious or linguistic differences, socio-economic inequalities, the oppression of minorities and the suppression of human rights. All of them have been aggravated by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, especially in the subregion of West Africa, and particularly in Sierra Leone, where the conflict was pursued with cynical abandon by external forces in defiance of calls made by the international community as well as by regional and subregional organizations regarding the need to urgently devise ways and means for the solution and management of the situation.

The establishment by the Secretary-General of an Inter-Agency Task Force for West Africa and the dispatch of a Mission to the region in March this year are great strides on the part of the United Nations to develop a real approach to conflict prevention and durable peace, provided that certain stakeholders in our subregion display a high degree of honesty and sincerity of purpose in their commitment to making peace prevail there. But when problems such as continuous illicit arms flows, rampant illegal exploitation of strategic natural resources and nefarious terrorist activities work against these efforts, it leaves my delegation wondering what is to be done next and how soon.

The channels to achieve durable peace and sustainable development in Africa have been firmly put in place by our respective leaders. Meeting this year at the thirty-seventh Organization of African Unity Summit in Lusaka, Zambia, they reverently mapped out a bold new approach for decisive African cooperation in a plethora of areas, including conflict prevention, management and resolution, security and interregional cooperation, good governance and democracy. The New African Initiative, now fondly called the New Partnership for Africa's Development, recognizes that

the links between peace, good governance and democracy are the basic attributes or the preconditions required for sustainable development to progress. Indeed, we are all aware that durable peace in any situation is a basic requirement for genuine economic and social progress.

My delegation takes note of the fact the Africa is the most technologically disadvantaged region in the world. Our situation has not been helped by years of wanton devastation and destruction in wars and civil strife. It is therefore imperative for us to focus on the two thematic areas of concentration in the Ad Hoc Working Group's report: conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building, and education. We wholeheartedly support the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report, especially regarding the establishment of support structures which would institute measures aimed at helping the population achieve self-reliance in the long run. The promotion of a culture of peace within our respective regions remains the best option for social cohesion and national reconciliation. It is against this background that my delegation would like the international community to place a greater premium on such measures so that our regions might live free from the scourge of war.

My country hosts the largest peacekeeping force ever assembled in the history of the United Nations, and I can safely state that through this action the international community remains dedicated to the pursuit of peace in Africa despite the many hiccups which have beset it in accomplishing its many goals. My delegation, as well as the Government and the people of Sierra Leone, wishes to take this opportunity to salute the peacekeepers of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone for their selfless sacrifice to save my country from slipping into oblivion. Peacekeeping remains a most desirable objective, as has been seen in the protection of civilians in armed conflict. Its principles must be supported whatever the cost. We support the call for capacity-building in the sphere of peacekeeping operations, and we also share the view that the development of better practices in different aspects of peacekeeping will enhance the attainment of this objective.

The ever-pervasive issues of poverty and the debt burden, with their corresponding attributes, continue to plague Africa's economic development. Post-conflict readjustment in African societies remains a nightmare for the Governments concerned and their people. Therefore, the current fall in official development assistance and foreign direct investment have not in any case helped the restructuring of the global economic order. We therefore appeal to the international community to live up to its commitment in assisting the developing world in taking strides.

Mr. Maquieira (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation is participating in this important debate on Africa, which gives us the opportunity us to comment on the work and recommendations of the General Assembly's group of experts.

Allow me to congratulate the Working Group, which has been entrusted with overseeing the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. That work has been led very effectively by Ambassadors Shamshad Ahmad of Pakistan and Inocencio Arias of Spain, who acted as facilitators.

Solid and durable peace in Africa is certainly one of the international community's most urgent objectives today. An African continent that is economically stable and invests in the development of its peoples is the greatest contribution to the fulfilment of that aspiration that the United Nations system as a whole can make. That would benefit not only Africa but the international community as a whole. That is why assistance to Africa is assistance to the international community itself.

Chile has always been firmly dedicated to finding solutions and initiatives to promote the interests of the African continent, first at the beginning of the decolonization process and later in the organs created for that purpose by the United Nations.

During its time as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, my country attached particular importance to the situation in Africa, particularly in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sierra Leone, making proposals and promoting initiatives and draft resolutions. Chile's contribution to the Special Court for Sierra Leone should also be mentioned.

Certainly, the problems afflicting Africa should not be discussed in the Security Council alone. Thus, I wish to reiterate the need to strengthen a general and

integrated focus on Africa, an approach that the Secretary-General and the Working Group have promoted.

We also recognize and support the actions and initiatives of African Governments themselves to prevent conflict, promote respect for human rights, consolidate democratic institutions and ensure good governance and the rule of law.

Today, poverty and its consequences are the main factor in most of the armed conflicts in the African continent. Four out of every 10 of the inhabitants live in conditions of absolute poverty, and everything indicates that this number will increase. To take an example, and quoting from the report on human development in sub-Saharan Africa, half of the people live below the poverty line, on less than $1 a day. Additional efforts are therefore needed to reform this trend to impoverishment of the continent. This will only be possible with a constant and sustained increase in gross domestic product. The external debt of the continent, reaching some $350 billion in 1998 figures, is an excessive burden for economies seriously affected by long-standing armed conflicts, displaced populations and the scourge of HIV/AIDS. We therefore believe it is important for us to speed up and broaden the implementation of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative in order to alleviate the weight of external debt on these African countries.

We also endorse the programme of action adopted at the third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Brussels last May. Along with a message of hope, we need to provide Africa with the benefits of free trade and globalization. The African countries need from the international community a progressive alliance that will enable them to resolve their problems. We call for the granting of the agreed levels of official development assistance, which is a tool that the countries of the continent must have if they are to be able to create the institutions and machinery they need in order to enter the world economy.

Document A/55/45, submitted by the Working Group to the General Assembly, is a report on the activities and proposals focusing on what I believe to be priority issues for promoting the reconstruction of the African continent. These are education and the prevention of conflicts and also post-conflict peace-building.

The report provides a panorama of progress achieved in implementing the Secretary-General's recommendations and the existing obstacles to their full implementation. It suggests actions that will be required to speed up this implementation, including continuing monitoring and follow-up, as has been done by the international community so far.

The Group's report recognizes efforts on the part of the United Nations system and international financial bodies, the international community and African States themselves, aimed at investment and training human resources, in accordance with the guidelines set by the Secretary-General.

Despite these efforts, however, achievements are still modest if you compare them with the magnitude of the challenge. Low enrolment in schools and the deterioration of the quality of education, among other factors, affect economic growth and sustainable development in the African countries. The challenge now is to reverse this trend, and this is where the international community and the United Nations can provide support.

The pandemic of AIDS and related diseases have devastated the continent through millions of deaths, orphan children, despair and poverty. Many who have been fortunate enough to survive have opted to leave their countries for safer continents. In negotiating the agreement on HIV/AIDS last June, the international community focused particular attention on Africa. Both the Rio Group and Chile understand the urgency in combating this scourge in this region. We need to have proper conditions so as to benefit Africa primarily, focusing on prevention, education and using available resources. No less important, there needs to be access to medication. The recent trade agreement is an important step forward in this regard. We need to show firm support for Africa in its efforts to combat HIV/AIDS.

In conflict prevention and peacekeeping, the United Nations plays an important role on the continent. My country also recognizes the role of subregional organizations in Africa. We need to help those organizations carry out their work. My country shares the concern regarding the humanitarian situation in areas that are still under conflict. Chile believes that we need to ensure respect for international humanitarian law and appreciates the work of international aid organizations. In dealing with regional

conflicts our position is guided by the principles of respect for international law and the peaceful settlement of disputes. We would highlight the important role to be played by mediation in regional conflicts.

My country welcomes the report submitted by the Working Group, which provides us with the core elements of the difficult situation in Africa and with suggestions for implementing the recommendations of the Secretary-General. It indicates the road to take, and that road will be a long one, and stresses that the United Nations has the main role to play in the development of the African region.

Mr. Motomura (Japan): In addressing the issues of conflict prevention and economic development in Africa, the importance of the activities carried out by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) cannot be overstated.

Today I would like to touch upon two issues, namely, the OAU and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), both of which play extremely important roles in conflict prevention and economic development in Africa.

Japan welcomes the decisions and declarations to establish the African Union adopted at the thirty-seventh regular session of the summit of the Heads of State and Government, held in Lusaka, Zambia, in July this year.

It is expected that, by integrating the African continent politically and economically, the African Union will advance the cause of peace and prosperity. It envisages the establishment of a pan-African parliament, a central bank, a monetary fund, an investment bank and a court of justice. It will, however, retain certain elements of the OAU, with a conference of Heads of State as the top decision-making body and the foreign ministers forming an executive council.

With these complicated and extensive tasks ahead, it is obvious that the African Union will need greater cooperation and support from the international community; support from the developed world is especially essential.

My Government recognizes the important role played by the OAU's Comprehensive Framework of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution in the advancement of peace on the continent, and, thus, has been supporting the OAU Peace Fund. Japan's assistance has been utilized, in part, for the establishment of a situation room in the conflict management centre, as well as for the various OAU field missions for conflict prevention. We remain committed to supporting the OAU's efforts in the pursuit of peace.

There is another dimension in which Japan is facilitating African initiatives. The so-called Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) process that Japan has been promoting since 1993 is contributing greatly to development and conflict prevention in Africa, while also supporting the OAU's comprehensive framework. Moreover, the participation of several Asian countries in the TICAD process is broadening the basis of support for African development and is promoting South-South cooperation between Africa and Asia.

My Government welcomes the adoption of NEPAD at the OAU Summit in Zambia in July this year. NEPAD has become one of the major items on the TICAD agenda. The preparatory meeting for the TICAD Ministerial Meeting, held in Dakar on 30 and 31 October this year, adopted many elements contained in NEPAD. I wish to take this opportunity, on behalf of my Government, to express sincere appreciation to the Government of Senegal for hosting the preparatory meeting and to welcome the adoption of the Chairman's summary report, which was subsequently endorsed at the Ministerial Meeting and has become a baseline document for discussion.

The TICAD Ministerial-level Meeting was held in Tokyo on 3 and 4 December. I am pleased to announce today that the Meeting adopted the Chair's statement of the TICAD Ministerial-level Meeting. In addition to welcoming the adoption of NEPAD, the Chair's statement referred to three issues on which NEPAD had placed particular emphasis: first, strengthening the foundation of development through the promotion of peace and good governance; secondly, investing in people through a focus on human resource development and the education and health sectors; and thirdly, reducing poverty through economic growth. In addition, South-South cooperation — particularly between Asia and Africa — regional cooperation and information and communications technology were recognized as important approaches to take in promoting African development.

The Ministerial-level Meeting also provided a useful opportunity to engage in dialogue with representatives of the private sector and civil society, and there was general acknowledgement that the private sector could be an important force behind sustainable development in Africa in the decades to come.

Finally, the Ministerial Meeting also decided that the Third Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD III) would be held in the latter half of 2003.

Japan will continue to contribute to tackling the immense problems confronting the African continent. The announcement that TICAD III will be held in the latter half of 2003 is just the latest testimony of my Government's enduring commitment to Africa.

Mr. Akinsanya (Nigeria): I am pleased to participate in the debate on agenda item 48, on causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa, and to commend the Secretary-General for his report, which spells out his efforts in the past year in resolving various conflict situations in Africa. Let me also express our appreciation for the report of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group.

My delegation believes that most conflict-prevention measures today are large scale and involve expensive civilian and military crisis-management operations normally undertaken after the outbreak of violent conflicts. In the face of limited financial and human resources, the focus should be conflict-prevention measures. There is need therefore to develop a culture of prevention through preventive investment, instead of intervention in conflicts after many lives have been lost and property destroyed.

The Nigerian delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's use of the mechanism of special envoys and representatives, who have worked closely with regional and subregional leaders and organizations to address ongoing conflicts with positive results in Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Ethiopia and Eritrea. We believe that the Secretary-General should be encouraged to stimulate, through more innovative mechanisms such as the establishment of ad hoc informal arrangements, ongoing discussions on conflict prevention. We trust that such discussions will also involve all stakeholders, including civil society.

Another innovation in the Secretary-General's report is the establishment of an inter-agency Task Force on the West African subregion, which has already visited the subregion. My delegation considers this initiative a welcome development in mobilizing the various United Nations departments, agencies, funds and programmes to address Africa's multifaceted problems. We urge the Secretary-General to continue to dispatch similar inter-agency task forces to other subregions as the need arises.

My delegation is convinced that the presence of United Nations offices in other countries in Africa, such as Burundi, Guinea-Bissau, the Central African Republic and Liberia, will enhance the United Nations role and will contribute to promoting peace and national reconciliation.

The role of regional and subregional organizations in complementing the work of the Security Council on issues of peace and security is self-evident. In this context the Organization of African Unity (OAU), through its central organ for conflict prevention, management and resolution, has been active in mediating conflicts as well as in serving as an early-warning mechanism on potential conflicts. In West Africa, the Protocol on the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security, adopted by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 1999, has provided for the creation of several organs, including the Mediation and Security Council and the Council of Elders, as well as a department in the Secretariat charged with the responsibility for peace and security issues. Support of the international community for these regional arrangements would enhance their capacity for conflict prevention and peace-building.

A major cause of political instability and a source of intra- and inter-State conflicts in Africa is the prevalence of small and light weapons in conflict areas. It has been Nigeria's considered view that the restriction of access to these arms and weapons would advance the cause of peace; hence Nigeria's active participation in the recently concluded United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We believe that the effective implementation of the Programme of Action adopted at the Conference would aid progress towards that goal. Such support would be in line with the various subregional initiatives adopted on the subject,

including the ECOWAS Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons, which has just been extended for another three-year period. We appreciate the United Nations close collaboration with ECOWAS through the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development and its implementation.

As the Secretary-General has clearly indicated in his report, the capacity of African countries to address the challenges of socio-economic development, peace and security will be enhanced only if there is urgent mobilization of resources — domestic and international — for Africa's development. At present, African countries are ill-placed to mobilize due to a number of factors, including the heavy external debt burden, lack of access to markets of the industrialized countries for their products, and weak institutional capacities. We believe that a situation in which between 20 per cent and 60 per cent of export earnings are expended on servicing external debt, as indicated in the report of the Inter-Agency Mission, is not one conducive to economic growth and sustainable development.

It is against this background that the last OAU Summit in Lusaka adopted a new development strategy, known as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), to promote and sustain Africa's development. As a new initiative based on African realities, NEPAD represents a commitment to strengthen conflict prevention, management and resolution, promote and protect democratic governance and develop standards of accountability and transparency in governance. It also presents the international community with a challenge, as well as with an opportunity to join in the regeneration of Africa through the new initiative.

The commitment to address Africa's conflicts and ensure sustainable development in a manner that will integrate Africa with the rest of the world is undeniable. In the same vein, we are appreciative of the prompt endorsement of the initiative by the countries of the Group of 8 and the European Union. What we now expect is the translation of that commitment into concrete action and measures to implement the programme.

The Acting President: In accordance with the decision taken by the General Assembly at its 73rd plenary meeting, held on 3 December 2001, I now call on the observer of the Holy See.

Archbishop Martino (Holy See) (*spoke in French*): Steeped in problems, the African continent is prey to many conflicts within and between States. In his 1998 report (A/52/871), the Secretary-General described the causes of conflict in Africa. In many African countries the lives of innocent civilians — millions of men, women and children — continue to this day to be threatened by armed conflicts. Some of these conflicts are barely mentioned in the global arena at a time when international actors are mobilizing elsewhere in the world to end violence and establish peace.

Africa is in urgent need of peace. It needs the determined support of the international community, not only to put an end to current wars but also to fight the underlying causes of conflict in order to bring lasting peace to the continent. As stated in the Ministerial Declaration on the role of the United Nations in support of the efforts of African countries, it is important to assist Africans

> "in their struggle for lasting peace, poverty eradication and sustainable development, thereby bringing Africa into the mainstream of the world economy". (*See A/56/3, chap. III, para. 29*)

Pope Paul VI showed prophetic insight by saying more than 30 years ago that development was the new name for peace. And as Pope John-Paul II recalled in his message for the World Day for Peace in 2000,

> "There is no true peace without fairness, truth, justice and solidarity. Failure awaits every plan which would separate two indivisible and interdependent rights: the right to peace and the right to an integral development born of solidarity."

In other words, there can be no lasting peace without development or development without lasting peace.

Moreover, there can be no doubt that the conditions necessary to promote peace and sustainable development cannot come about without the establishment of participatory democracy enabling the peoples of Africa to craft their own future. Specifically, it is necessary to promote good governance and respect for universal, indivisible basic human rights and fundamental freedoms, as is required in a State based on the rule of law, and as demanded by the inalienable

dignity of the human being: those elements form its foundation.

Africa thirsts for peace and seeks reconciliation among its constituent elements at the local, national, regional and continent-wide levels. Efforts to promote African development should also encompass a concern to repair damaged social relationships, to restore trust on all sides and to provide the joy of peaceful coexistence and mutual acceptance. Here, religious communities continue to play a key role in raising awareness and in promoting reconciliation and forgiveness, without which there can be no lasting peace.

The world has seen too much violence and conflict, whose roots lie in economic inequality and despair. The Holy See has many times stated its views on this subject, notably in two of its most important social encyclicals: *Populorum Progressio* and *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*. In the latter document, His Holiness Pope John Paul II wrote:

> "In fact, if the social question has acquired a worldwide dimension, this is because the demand for justice can only be satisfied on that level. To ignore this demand could encourage the temptation among the victims of injustice to respond with violence, as happens at the origin of many wars. Peoples excluded from the fair distribution of the goods originally destined for all could ask themselves: why not respond with violence to those who first treat us with violence?"

Another crucial problem that continues to hang over the future of the peoples of Africa is undoubtedly the international debt of the continent's countries. In the preparations for the year-2000 Jubilee, the Holy Father emphasized that one of the necessary conditions for that preparation was:

> "a commitment to justice and peace in a world like ours, marked by so many conflicts and intolerable social and economic inequalities".

In the same vein, he called upon people to:

> "give thought, among other things, to reducing substantially, if not cancelling outright, the international debt which seriously threatens the future of many nations".

In a climate where the key word has become globalization, and in which there is a real risk that the least productive will be marginalized and excluded, Pope John Paul II has repeatedly reminded the world of the urgent duty to stand in solidarity with the poor. He is pleased that the United Nations has chosen to appeal for solidarity with Africa through its important initiative, the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, which has brought Africa out of oblivion by drawing the attention of Governments, both African and non-African, to the economic, social and political challenges of the continent.

In taking stock of the progress made in this area, the Pope was pleased to note the efforts made by the legislatures of creditor States that have voted for a substantial reduction of the bilateral debt, which was putting a strain on the poorest and most indebted countries. The Pope expressed the wish that the Governments would rapidly finalize these parliamentary decisions. Moreover, he was concerned about the question of the multilateral debt of the poorest countries to the international financial institutions and hoped that the member States of these organizations, especially those with more decision-making authority, would manage to find the necessary consensus to reach a rapid solution to a question on which the development process in so many countries depends, and that has severe consequences for the economic and living situation of many people.

While welcoming the new initiative of the international financial institutions, consisting of the drawing up of strategies to fight poverty, with the participation of, among others, the Governments and civil society of the countries concerned, we consider it urgent that appropriate measures be taken to guarantee solid cooperation between the Governments and civil society, as well as the broad participation of the latter, so as not to stifle the voices of millions of poor and impoverished people whose living conditions the United Nations wishes to improve.

In particular, it needs to be ensured that money coming from debt reduction is invested in those sectors, such as health and education, that affect the lives of the poor. Religious communities, through their presence among the marginalized, are the first line of defence for the wretched. They can ensure, especially in Africa, that what is meant for the poor will indeed reach them in the context of a movement of solidarity.

Moreover, the conditions of access to this programme should be more flexible, and the number of countries that could benefit from this initiative should be increased, taking into account in particular those countries suffering from war.

In this context, how can we ignore the resounding appeal of the Pope, who, at the beginning of this new millennium, said,

> "How can it be that even today there are still people dying of hunger? Condemned to illiteracy? Lacking the most basic medical care? Without a roof over their heads?
>
> "The scenario of poverty can extend indefinitely, in addition to its traditional forms we think of its newer patterns. These latter often affect financially affluent sectors and groups which are nevertheless threatened by despair at the lack of meaning in their lives, by drug addiction, by fear of abandonment in old age or sickness, by marginalization or social discrimination." (*Apostolic Letter Novo Millennio Inuente, 50*)

In view of this situation, the Holy See urgently appeals for new solidarity with the impoverished and marginalized in the world, especially in Africa, and expresses the wish that special attention will be accorded to the new African initiative for development and that the necessary resources will be mobilized to support the efforts of African countries in constructing a better future for the continent, which will only contribute to the emergence of a better world with justice and peace for all.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/56/L.28, as orally revised.

Before we do so, I shall read out the list of additional sponsors: Algeria, Angola, Austria, Belgium, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Ireland, Italy, Kuwait, Lesotho, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Portugal, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, the Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Togo, Tunisia, the United Kingdom, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/56/L.28, as orally revised?

Draft resolution A/56/L.28 was adopted (resolution 56/37).

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania.

Mr. Yussuf (United Republic of Tanzania): I would like to take this opportunity to extend, on behalf of the African Group, my delegation's sincere gratitude to all the delegations that spoke on this agenda item. I would also like to take this opportunity to convey my heartfelt thanks to all the delegations that supported the draft resolution, which is very important for the development of Africa.

It is high time that Africa realized the urgent need to put an immediate halt to all the conflicts that continue to ravage the continent. Africa will not attain the economic and social development that it so greatly desires if it continues to escalate existing conflicts. It is only through the attainment of durable peace that sustainable development in Africa can be realized.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of item 48?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: Before adjourning the meeting, let me also thank all the people who have made this morning possible: the secretaries, and all of you.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.

United Nations A/56/PV.75

General Assembly

Fifty-sixth session

Official Records

75th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 5 December 2001, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo ..... (Republic of Korea)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Kumalo (South Africa), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 108

Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family

Plenary meetings devoted to volunteering to mark the closing of the International Year of Volunteers

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/288)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.27)

The Acting President: The General Assembly, pursuant to resolution 55/57 of 4 December 2000 and its decision adopted at the 3rd plenary meeting, on 19 September 2001, will devote today two plenary meetings to volunteering, to mark the closing of the International Year of Volunteers, under agenda item 108.

The following is a statement of the President of the General Assembly on this occasion.

"Today marks the closing of the International Year of Volunteers 2001, which provided a valuable opportunity to heighten public awareness and support for volunteerism at a global level. During this period, more than 120 national committees of United Nations Member States hosted various activities in some 200 cities including seminars, exhibitions and campaigns in celebration of volunteers.

"We are in need of volunteers more than ever. These days, we face growing problems of a national as well as transnational nature: environmental degradation, poverty, HIV/AIDS, drug trafficking and terrorism, to name just a few. Volunteers all over the world can make significant contributions to solving these problems through their activities in the fields of social and economic development, humanitarian aid, the promotion of peace, democracy and, in particular, respect for human rights.

"Volunteering is different from other types of human activity because, among other reasons, volunteers usually bring a distinctive enthusiasm and exuberance to their works. Moreover, volunteer work is enriching for the individual volunteer. People who volunteer are better able to develop their potentialities, share knowledge and skills and gain opportunities for career advancement.

"Volunteering also enhances the self-esteem of participants, helps people learn from each other and widens social, economic and cultural networks around the world. In this regard, I would like to highly commend the United Nations Volunteers programme and its Executive Coordinator, Ms. Sharon Capeling-Alakija, for

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their devoted efforts to assist developing countries by sending out about 4,000 United Nations volunteers each year.

"Let us renew our commitment, individually and collectively, to supporting the volunteer movement. Above all, it is the fundamental human desire to help each other that we need to mobilize and channel in order to build a harmonious and peaceful world. Volunteerism is thus at the heart of the ideals of the United Nations and should be the future for all of us."

I now call on the representative of Japan to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.27.

Mr. Watanabe (Japan): I should like to begin by offering my heartfelt congratulations to Secretary-General Annan and to the United Nations itself on being jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 2001. This gives great pleasure to Japan, as it is the International Year of Volunteers that we have been promoting. The Nobel committee's decision to honour Secretary-General Annan and the United Nations with this illustrious award reflects the international community's utmost esteem for the United Nations tireless efforts to achieve world peace and prosperity under our Secretary-General's outstanding leadership.

While mourning the victims of the 11 September terrorist attacks on the United States and expressing my profound condolences to their bereaved families, I would also like to convey my sincere sympathy to the American people and the United States Government for their dreadful loss. The terrorists' cowardly acts were a vile assault not only on the United States, but on all of humanity — beyond contempt and absolutely unforgivable.

Amid this tragedy, the one bright spot in our hearts came from the countless volunteers who rushed to the disaster sites from throughout the United States and across the globe to offer both spiritual and material support to the victims and their families. We were all deeply moved when we saw these volunteers selflessly assisting the citizens, as well as the local fire fighters and police officers.

The Government of Japan originally proposed the International Year of Volunteers back in 1997 as a result of our own experience of crises that threaten precious human life. Some 6,000 Japanese died in the great Hanshin-Awaji earthquake of January 1995 and massive damages were suffered. The earnest efforts of the Japanese and foreign volunteers who came to assist the local residents in their time of need minimized the damage and provided a great impetus for the subsequent reconstruction works. This phenomenal support led us to recognize anew the critical role of volunteers in contemporary society.

Not only do volunteers reaffirm our faith in humanity during major tragedies; they also play an important role in our daily lives in diverse fields, ranging from nursing care for the elderly to environmental preservation. A vast number of volunteers are also directly or indirectly involved with providing humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan and assistance to the refugees from the present conflict there.

While the end of the cold war and the progress of globalization are providing diverse benefits in economic development, they are also forcing us to recognize the many grave direct threats to human life that transcend national boundaries, such as poverty, environmental destruction, armed conflicts, land mines, the displacement of refugees, illicit drugs and HIV/AIDS. In order to cope with such threats, the Government of Japan has been calling on the international community to acknowledge the importance of the concept of human security, to protect the lives and dignity of each and every human being and so that all people can pursue their abundant potential to enjoy creative and worthwhile lives.

Today, thousands of Japanese are engaged in voluntary activities across the globe under the auspices of the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers and United Nations Volunteers programmes. I believe that these types of individual voluntary activities at the grass-roots level are in deep harmony with the concept of human security, which emphasizes respect for the individual.

As the initial advocate of the International Year of Volunteers, Japan has been actively implementing related works from an early date. In the spring of 1999, we launched a domestic system towards achieving the four goals of the International Year of Volunteers and this has served as the main framework for Government organs and private-sector enterprises to support International Year activities. Numerous events have been held throughout the country, and the Japanese media have assisted with the public relations work. The

Cabinet Office has also sponsored numerous forums and symposiums, and collected and displayed photographs, paintings and haiku related to volunteerism. The Japanese postal service has issued a commemorative stamp. For those who make donations to non-profit organizations, the preferential tax treatment system came into operation this October.

In addition to these domestic efforts, Japan has also provided support for the establishment of International Year of Volunteers committees in many nations, and has made every possible effort to support vibrant activities related to the International Year of Volunteers on a worldwide scale.

With these experiences in mind, Japan, along with the Netherlands, would like to introduce the draft resolution entitled "Recommendations on support for volunteering". We believe that those recommendations can serve as a guide to Governments, as well as to the United Nations system, to extend further support for volunteer activities.

The 2002 International Federation of Association Football World Cup will be sponsored by Japan and the Republic of Korea. Volunteers will play an essential role in that event by assisting the teams, supporters and media from each nation. Those volunteers will include foreigners living in Japan, who will provide information, interpretation and first aid to spectators from around the world.

I believe that volunteerism is an activity that deepens the bonds that connect individual human beings. In Japan we have a traditional saying from the ancient culture of the tea ceremony. *Ichi-go ichi-e* means that we should treasure every encounter, for it will never recur. I believe that the World Cup will provide an opportunity for many Japanese and Koreans to enjoy the fruits of such once-in-a-lifetime meetings.

While these meetings mark the closing of the International Year of Volunteers, we think it is critical to maintain the momentum that has been built up over the year. We cannot allow the International Year of Volunteers to end merely as a single-year event. Rather, we must seize this opportunity to use the foundations cultivated during the International Year of Volunteers as a springboard to a brighter future and as the first year of voluntary efforts towards creating a new and better society. We truly hope that the spirit of the United Nations in proclaiming the first year of the new century the International Year of Volunteers will continue to be honoured by the activities of the United Nations and each of the Member States in the years to come.

In closing, I would like to praise the United Nations Volunteers for their outstanding achievements in promoting the International Year of Volunteers, and to express our high expectations for their continued efforts in the future. The Government of Japan will certainly continue to strive to contribute to the international community, together with the United Nations Volunteers.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands to also introduce draft resolution A/56/L.27.

Mr. Peters (Netherlands): Allow me to add a few words of introduction to complement the statement made by the representative of Japan in introducing the draft resolution before us today (A/56/L.27). Let me first turn to the main paragraphs.

The preambular paragraphs refer to other United Nations texts dealing with volunteering. I would like to point out that those paragraphs take note of resolutions of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission for Social Development, as well as final documents of recent conferences. Furthermore, the contribution of volunteers to society is recognized. We have all realized how topical this is.

Paragraph 6 introduces the recommendations contained in the annex. The draft resolution then calls upon Governments and the organizations of the United Nations system to give those recommendations due consideration in their work. Finally, paragraph 9 allows the General Assembly to assess the outcome of the International Year of Volunteers next year, drawing on a report from the Secretary-General.

The major achievement of the draft resolution is of course the recommendations contained in its annex. The recommendations are intended to provide Governments and the organizations of the United Nations system with options regarding their policies on volunteering. They are based on the Secretary-General's report contained in document A/56/288, which reflects experiences and ideas from all over the world. As is stressed in paragraph 3 of section I of the annex, on general considerations, the recommendations do not advocate one single model of best practice, since what works well in one country may not work

well in another with very different cultures and traditions.

I would like to give the Assembly a few examples of the recommendations. Among other things, the following policy options are recommended: publicly recognizing the contribution of volunteers to society; encouraging public sector workers to set an example; establishing a volunteer centre or focal point; using media to disseminate a positive image of volunteers, as well as concrete information; and enabling as many people as possible to benefit from doing volunteer work. More generally, the recommendations suggest creating conditions to facilitate the work of volunteers. Governments and organizations of the United Nations system are also asked to integrate the contribution of volunteers in development planning. More generally, the United Nations system would see that there are many opportunities for it to benefit from in the contribution of volunteers. Finally, we are called upon to recognize the work of United Nations Volunteers.

I would like to draw the Assembly's attention to a few changes to be made to the text. To accommodate all delegations and to enable the adoption of the draft resolution by consensus, the following changes have been made to document A/56/L.27.

The first change is in paragraph 6 of the draft resolution. That paragraph should read as follows:

> "*Lays down* recommendations on ways Governments and the United Nations system could support volunteering, in the annex to the present resolution".

The second small change is to be made in subparagraph (a) (iii) of paragraph 1 of section II of the annex, on government support. The paragraph should read as follows:

> "Disseminate the results of studies and surveys on the contribution of volunteerism, where they exist, through the media, schools, non-governmental organizations and other channels."

The third small change is in (b)(ii) of paragraph 1 of section II of the annex, where the words "and organizations" are inserted at the end of the second sentence, so that the sentence reads:

> "National volunteer centres provide effective leadership in the formal volunteer movement, while regional and local centres ensure linkages with the grass-roots communities and organizations."

The fourth and last change is in section III of the annex. In the first line of paragraph 1 the word "relevant" is inserted, to read:

> "It is recommended that the relevant organizations and bodies of the United Nations system ...".

I would like to read out the sponsors that were not mentioned in document A/56/L.27 but have joined later. These are Barbados, Belarus, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Ghana, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Madagascar, Malaysia, Marshall Islands, Mongolia, Myanmar, Niger, Solomon Islands, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Yugoslavia, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The sponsors trust that the draft resolution will be adopted without a vote later today.

Mr. De Loecker (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the European Union. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated countries Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, as well as Iceland and Liechtenstein as European Free Trade Association countries members of the European Economic Area, associate themselves with this statement.

The decision taken by the General Assembly in 1997 to designate 2001 the International Year of Volunteers, the closing of which we are celebrating today, has done much to focus the attention of the international community on voluntary activities.

Volunteering exists in one form or another in most societies. Helping others by giving one's time and effort, of one's own free will and without pay, is a form of social and human behaviour that has yet to receive the recognition that it deserves. Volunteering promotes social participation and active citizenship and strengthens civil society. It can also help to maintain social stability and cohesion. Volunteering in its various forms is a benefit to society, for it is a conduit

for universal values in the fields of human rights, democracy, the fight against racism, solidarity and sustainable development.

When underprivileged individuals and people living free from need join together in voluntary activities, innovative partnerships can be created and bridges built between the various sectors of society. Voluntary work is therefore also a major factor in the fight against poverty.

The activities of volunteers also impact on many areas of global interest, particularly awareness of violations of human rights, environmental protection, the universal ban on anti-personnel mines, the fight against racism, women's rights, health, and managing and mitigating the effects of disasters, to name but a few.

It is the task of Governments to draw up strategies and programmes to promote volunteer work. However, if the scope of volunteer programmes is to be expanded and their long-term viability guaranteed, there must be a partnership between the public authorities and civil society. Volunteering offers a vast pool of skills and resources, ready to be invested in governmental projects. Joint action by public authorities and volunteer associations can help both to achieve their common objectives.

Volunteering also offers considerable benefits to the volunteers themselves. The men and women who engage in voluntary activities have the opportunity to strengthen social, economic and cultural contacts, acquire practical knowledge, and develop a number of personal and professional skills, thus improving their chances of employment. Volunteering creates a reserve of goodwill, which can be drawn on when necessary.

Many young people are active in various forms of voluntary work. This helps develop creativity and an enterprising spirit in young people and contributes to social innovation. Young people who do voluntary work are better able to develop their capacities and share knowledge, making them more employable and better able to participate in society in general.

During this International Year of Volunteers, the Ministers of the European Union meeting in the Youth Council approved on 29 November a resolution on the benefits of voluntary activities by young people in the context of the development of European Community action on the issue of youth. It invites member States to take the measures they deem appropriate to remove legal and administrative obstacles so as to provide every opportunity for youth voluntary activity in a national and international context.

The resolution invites the Commission and the member States of the Union, within their respective spheres of competence, to take measures to strengthen, qualitatively and quantitatively, the role of volunteering among young people and to take as their guide, where appropriate, the strategic objectives formulated by the United Nations in the framework of the International Year of Volunteers. It also exhorts them to develop a policy on volunteering for young people and to strengthen European cooperation in this area, using the following strategic objectives of the United Nations resolution declaring 2001 the International Year of Volunteers: access to and promotion of voluntary activities, recognition and support for voluntary activities, incentives and facilities, the creation of a network between all parties involved and, finally, quality care. The resolution invites the member States and the European Commission to recognize the importance of experience gained in the context of youth voluntary activity and to collate and exchange good practice in that regard. Finally, it asks them to support all the parties involved in the implementation of voluntary activity for young people.

In adopting that resolution, the European Union Ministers meeting at the Youth Council wished to highlight the role of the main players in youth policy, which is to say young people themselves and social and educational actors. The resolution also seeks to give volunteering its rightful place among the initiatives that resulted from the European Commission's white paper on youth.

The European Union would like to emphasize how much importance it attaches to developing volunteering for middle-aged and elderly persons, which already plays an important role in very many countries. This form of volunteering, which supplements the voluntary work done by young people, allows for an intergenerational transfer of knowledge and experience and is of great benefit not only to society, but also to the volunteers themselves, who avoid exclusion or rejection by younger generations.

The European Union takes this opportunity to draw Member States' attention to the draft resolution

on recommendations on support for volunteering, which was jointly introduced by the Netherlands and Japan today.

The European Union wishes to congratulate the United Nations Volunteers programme, which acted as central coordinator for the International Year of Volunteers, on the work it has undertaken in order to achieve better recognition for volunteering, facilitate the action of volunteers, set up networks and promote volunteering. The European Union wishes to reaffirm its support for the United Nations Volunteers and encourages them to continue their efforts, for the benefit of the quality and quantity of volunteering throughout the world.

Mr. Shen Guofang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Volunteerism is an ideal reflection of the love, dedication, unity and service that are part of the richness of humanity. Volunteer services and voluntary participation in social life without pay are becoming an important part of human activities. They represent action to advance social development and to promote human progress. In this context, it is very important and useful for the development of international volunteerism that the United Nations has declared this year the International Year of Volunteers and carried out a series of relevant activities in this regard. I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to the Secretary-General, who has actively promoted advances in this field, and my highest regard for volunteers and volunteer organizations around the world.

The Chinese Government attaches great importance to the International Year of Volunteers. With the support of President Jiang Zemin, China has set up the National Committee for the International Year of Volunteers 2001, headed by State Councillor Wu Yi and composed of more than 30 government ministries and commissions, as well as non-governmental organizations. The Committee has been designed specifically to coordinate and plan activities for the realization of four major goals in China during the International Year of Volunteers.

After years of efforts, a nationwide network of volunteer service organizations has taken shape in China. According to statistics, more than 24,000 service centres have been established across the country, which have provided more than 80 million work shifts amounting to more than 4.1 billion hours of voluntary service. Among the volunteers were students, teachers, medical doctors and people from the scientific, technological and all other sectors of society. Their contributions and efforts have not only hugely benefited China's economic and social development but also played a highly positive role in promoting social stability, trust and integration, as well as cultural development and social values.

In order to create a legal basis for volunteer services in China, some provinces and cities have in recent years adopted local laws and regulations in this regard, providing a favourable social environment and protection for voluntary activities.

Young volunteers are the main force of volunteerism in China today, whose work basically includes the following. First is the promotion of development and the eradication of poverty. In 1996 China launched the Young Volunteers' Poverty-alleviation Relay Programme, which has recruited volunteers to work, each for a certain time period, in long-term relays for different initiatives. Altogether, the programme has recruited and sent 10,000 volunteers to 207 poor counties to do voluntary work for a period of half a year to two years in the fields of basic education, health and public hygiene, the promotion of the use of new technologies in agriculture and so on. Their work has helped poor counties in all these aspects and improved their capacity for self-development. Moreover, about 1 million college and high school students have been organized to go to poor and disaster-stricken rural areas every summer to carry out volunteer activities.

Second is community services and public welfare. Regular one-on-one assistance arrangements have been made for young volunteers to help more than 2.5 million poor families in both urban and rural areas. Volunteers across the country have regularly provided care and health services to the old, the disabled, orphans and other vulnerable groups. They have also organized events to reduce illiteracy and promote the learning of science and technology, as well as cultural and entertainment events.

The third is environmental protection. In 1999 the Chinese Government launched an environmental movement of young volunteers called Protect the Mother River. The Government has also recruited people to plant trees and fight against desertification, water pollution and "white" pollution from plastic waste in important areas along the Yellow River.

Over the past 20 years or so, the Chinese Government and civil society have carried out very fruitful cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Volunteers programme. Since 1981 almost 200 United Nations Volunteers have been sent to China, and they have made remarkable contributions in education, health, science and technology, environmental protection, poverty alleviation and other fields. China has also sent, through this organization, more than 160 volunteers to more than 30 developing countries to work in the fields of agriculture, water conservation, health and so on. Volunteer service is becoming an important channel of exchange and cooperation between China and the rest of the world.

Mr. Pierson (United States of America): I am pleased to represent the United States of America in my remarks before the United Nations General Assembly in support of volunteerism, both in the United States and internationally.

In the United States, the Points of Light Foundation and the Association of Junior Leagues International partnered to convene and lead the United States International Year of Volunteers Steering Committee. This Committee has assembled a broad community of 1,121 organizations representing all 50 States and has brought new recognition to volunteerism. The United States registry includes a diversity of organizations from every socio-economic bracket, a wide array of ethnic and racial diversity and a broad spectrum of generations. Examples include Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, Rotarians, Student Government Associations and HIV/AIDS outreach groups. The list is a who's who of volunteer organizations, and the number of groups continues to grow.

America, President Bush and his Administration actively support volunteerism, and, in fact, it was one of the cornerstones of our society even before we achieved independence. As early as the 1820s, a famous visitor to the United States — Alexis de Tocqueville — in his masterpiece *Democracy in America* identified volunteerism as one of the most visible characteristics of the new nation and as one of the attributes that most distinguished us from the old world. Almost two centuries later, we can still point to de Tocqueville's insight with great pride and marvel that we were and remain a nation of volunteers.

I have the honour and privilege of being a part of the President's Administration as Acting Deputy Director of the Peace Corps. The Peace Corps has been a major part of my life and of my family. Previously, I have served as Country Director in Ghana, Botswana, Namibia and Swaziland and I helped establish programmes in Zimbabwe, Armenia, Bulgaria and Uzbekistan.

Many in this General Assembly have had first-hand experience with United States Peace Corps volunteers. It is very common for an ambassador to say that an American volunteer taught him or her in secondary school. It is with great satisfaction that we can say that a Peace Corps volunteer has frequently been able to make a difference in someone's life. At times, that someone has later occupied high-level positions in his or her Government. A case in point is the story of Mr. Alejandro Toledo, the President of Peru, who credits the help of two Peace Corps volunteers in his early life. We are very proud that he has accepted the National Peace Corps Association invitation to be the keynote speaker at the Peace Corps fortieth anniversary celebrations in June of next year.

In the United States, seven current members of the United States Congress have served as Peace Corps volunteers.

When faced with challenges such as illiteracy, poverty, crime and environmental problems, America has always relied upon the dedication and action of the volunteer community. Today, many groups have discovered the hunger in people's hearts to help others, and their overwhelming willingness to do so. America's International Year of Volunteers Steering Committee established a goal to celebrate and advocate volunteerism around the world through a strategy of awareness, engagement and capacity-building.

Nowhere was this strategy more clearly demonstrated than during and following the tragic events of 11 September. As workers in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania, as well as others throughout the United States, demonstrated, volunteers are at the very core of our survival as a society.

We witnessed the teams of volunteer firemen who travelled hundreds of miles to work at ground zero and the volunteers of the American Red Cross, who continue to help the survivors and their families cope with the aftermath. Proof of our willingness to help others is evident in the neighbour who spends hours

preparing meals, takes care of a survivor's child or simply lends an ear to listen. Each of these people, each of these actions, makes an important difference.

Many individuals throughout America devote much of their time and energy to helping others. This help is generally provided through government, non-profit and non-governmental organizations, corporations and faith-based groups. The United States Government is a strong advocate of volunteerism, both domestic and international.

The United States Government also partners through the Peace Corps with the United Nations Volunteers programme, described as one of the hidden jewels of the United Nations system. Close to 5,000 men and women representing over 150 nationalities are serving each year in developing countries as United Nations Volunteers. This year alone, the United Nations Volunteers programme mobilized 900 United Nations Volunteers to serve in the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor. These efforts are lead by Kevin Gilroy, a former Peace Corps volunteer.

Domestically, the Corporation for National and Community Service carries on the volunteer tradition by working with state commissions, non-profit organizations, faith-based groups, schools and other civic and community organizations to provide volunteer opportunities for all Americans. The Corporation for National and Community Service has three major service initiatives: AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve America and the National Senior Service Corps.

AmeriCorps engages more than 50,000 Americans in intensive, results-driven service. On 8 November of this year, President Bush called for the Corporation to mobilize more than 20,000 new Senior Corps and AmeriCorps participants in the coming year to support police departments, fire departments, our parks and recreation departments, public health agencies and disaster preparedness and mitigation to assist the personnel in those agencies.

Many schools are discovering the value of service learning through projects that link education and service. At the forefront of this movement is Learn and Serve America, which helps support nearly 1 million students, from kindergarten through college, who are meeting community needs while improving their academic skills and learning the habits of good citizenship.

And we should not forget the important role that senior citizens can make as volunteers. In our society, we strongly support senior citizens to pass along their knowledge and experience to others through volunteer work. Seniors are one of America's most vital resources, offering a wealth of experience and energy. Through the National Senior Service Corps, nearly half a million Americans, age 55 and older, share their time and talents to help solve local problems.

President George H. W. Bush founded the Points of Light Foundation in 1990 as a non-partisan, non-profit organization devoted to promoting volunteer community service. Through its network of over 500 volunteer centres, the Foundation strives to bring people together through volunteer service as a powerful way to combat alienation and alleviate social problems. Dr. Norman Brown, Chairman of the Points of Light Foundation, has done an exemplary job over the past year to lead the United States International Year of the Volunteers (IYV) efforts.

Outstanding non-profit and non-government supported organizations are also plentiful in the United States. Another important leader in the United States International Year of the Volunteer effort has been Clotilde Dedecker, former President of the Association of Junior Leagues International. This Association represents 296 Junior Leagues in the United States, Canada, Mexico and Great Britain. For over 100 years, Junior Leagues have promoted volunteerism, working toward developing the full potential of women and improving local communities.

The 193,000 dedicated and creative women members come from varying backgrounds and interests. These talented women discovered back in 1901 the extraordinary power in volunteer numbers. Junior Leagues across the United States have award-winning programmes addressing the needs of homeless and near-homeless women and children, family violence and abuse prevention, comprehensive day care and short-term respite care for children affected by HIV/AIDS, and legal, housing and employment assistance.

The Honourable Colin Powell, the United States Secretary of State, founded America's Promise in 1997. Following a presidential summit attended by President Clinton, President George H. W. Bush, President Carter, President Ford, with First Lady Nancy Reagan representing her husband, a challenge came forth for

America to make our youth a national priority. America's Promise has created a diverse and growing alliance of nearly 500 national organizations to build upon the character and competence of our nation's youth.

Countless other volunteer organizations help Americans address their problems every day.

In support of international volunteerism, the Government of the United States created and supports the Peace Corps. Founded by President John F. Kennedy in 1961, the history of the Peace Corps is the story of tens of thousands of people who have served as volunteers. Their individual experiences in towns, villages and cities around the world have composed a legacy of service that has become part of United States history. Peace Corps volunteers teach English and work in business development, the environment, agriculture, health and community development. We also have special programmes in HIV/AIDS and technology. The Peace Corps Crisis Corps programme has helped mobilize returned Peace Corps volunteers to help on disaster relief projects.

Currently, the United States has more than 7,000 Peace Corps volunteers in 70 countries around the world. More than 163,000 volunteers have served in 135 countries during the past 40 years.

As President John F. Kennedy dispatched the first group of Peace Corps volunteers to Ghana in 1961, he made a prediction: that "The logic of the Peace Corps is that someday we are going to bring it home to America". It is on that foundation that the Peace Corps, 40 years ago, began developing what is called its third goal, which is to help educate Americans about the countries in which it serves. Returned Peace Corps volunteers have formed in the United States "friends of" groups, ranging from the Friends of Afghanistan to the Friends of Zambia. These groups help to educate Americans about the volunteers' countries of service.

The Peace Corps has a formal programme called the Paul D. Coverdell World-Wise Schools Programme, in which current volunteers are matched with schools in the United States to help educate students about their countries of service. As one volunteer from Central Asia was quoted on a United States television network as saying, "I have a family in the United States that I love, but I also love my host country family."

As the Secretary-General eloquently stated at the very outset of his report to the General Assembly earlier this year (A/56/288),

> "Volunteerism is an important component of any strategy aimed at poverty reduction, sustainable development and social integration, in particular overcoming social exclusion and discrimination."

Recently, President and Mrs. Bush have focused our attention on the plight of the children and women of Afghanistan. Children all across the United States have responded with remarkable generosity and with deep compassion for Afghan children by sending in a dollar towards relief efforts for Afghan children. The First Lady has drawn our attention to efforts assisting Afghan women. In the first-ever radio address by a First Lady, Laura Bush stated that

> "Fighting brutality against women and children is not the expression of a specific culture; it is the acceptance of our common humanity: a commitment shared by people of goodwill on every continent."

I am very proud to have been able to speak about the efforts of the United States to promote volunteerism as we close the International Year of Volunteers. We have enjoyed excellent leadership from those individuals I have mentioned here today, as well as from the countless thousands who find the time to volunteer their efforts, skills and time each and every day. I am certain that they would agree with Simone Weil when she stated that "You have not lived until you have done something for someone who can never repay you".

Ms. Niehuis (Germany): While Germany fully endorses and subscribes to the European Union statement on this item, allow me to seize this opportunity to make a few remarks on German activities related to the International Year of Volunteers. The Year produced numerous useful initiatives for a policy to promote voluntary social work in Germany: in the municipalities and cities, in the federal Länder and at the federal level. In that context, for instance, a German Bundestag Enquete Commission, for instance, deals with promoting community work and voluntary social work; in the spring of 2002 it will be presenting proposals on how the framework conditions must be changed in the interest of voluntary social work.

Our country has enjoyed a long and sound tradition of voluntary work in the various sectors of youth and women's work, welfare, sports, and areas such as fire brigades, rescue services and politics. For example, in Germany, more than a million volunteers are available to fire brigades.

However, it is only now that a common cross-sectoral understanding of these areas of voluntary work and a corresponding coherent concept for a policy to promote voluntary social commitment are beginning to develop in the federal Government, the Länder and the municipalities, essentially encouraged by the fillip provided by the International Year of Volunteers.

Even before the International Year of Volunteers took off, we were able to publish the results of the first representative nationwide survey on voluntary work and community service in Germany, and in doing so to render more visible the scope and variety of the voluntary social work that is being done. At the same time, the survey showed the unexpectedly high potential that exists for voluntary commitment.

Thirty-four per cent of the population over the age of 14 years — in other words, 22 million women and men — are doing voluntary work; almost another third, another 20 million, show an interest in taking up commitments or doing additional voluntary work. We have taken on the challenge of making use of that potential and of opening up new access to voluntary social commitment, with a campaign for the International Year of Volunteers entitled "My skills are invaluable". Elements of that campaign are the Internet home page www.freiwillig.de — *freiwillig* being the German word for "voluntary" — advertisements and posters, a campaign kit, the magazine *Freiwillig* and a travelling exhibition: instruments just like or similar to those employed in many other countries as well. The campaign was designed to support activities carried out by voluntary organizations in commemoration of the International Year of Volunteers; those organizations regularly fell back on it. It also enjoyed considerable success in the media.

The networking of various social areas such as sports, youth, the welfare sector, the media, enterprises, trade unions, churches, self-help organizations and voluntary agencies was done essentially by our National Advisory Committee for the International Year of Volunteers and through its working groups, their events and projects.

Networking and recognition are the two objectives of the International Year of Volunteers. We were able successfully to incorporate those two objectives in Germany and to take full advantage of the opportunities which the International Year of Volunteers provided. We intend to carry on this improved networking and cooperation beyond 2001 in the form of a platform or an alliance for voluntary work as a means of coordinating and supporting initiatives to promote voluntary involvement at the federal level and of facilitating national and international exchanges of experience. These future initiatives also include the implementation of proposals which will be submitted in the coming year by the parliamentary Enquete Commission on the future of community work to the German Bundestag. Those proposals are intended to improve especially the legal and financial framework conditions for voluntary work, and are meant also to establish a coherent policy for the promotion of voluntary social work on a permanent basis.

In Germany, the concept of the voluntary social year and the voluntary ecological year has for many years provided young people with the opportunity to do voluntary work for the community. We have made use of the International Year to prepare a law to place these opportunities on a better footing and to expand their scope.

In the course of the Year, we became more involved than before in international cooperation in the area of volunteering. In that effort we were supported by the United Nations Volunteers. The coordinating role that body played in the International Year of Volunteers from its headquarters at Bonn was undoubtedly evident worldwide. We also have to thank our next-door neighbour the Netherlands, host of the international conference on the International Year of Volunteers, for many an inspiration.

Voluntary social work, carried out without an eye to financial gain, is also very important in the area of development cooperation. Development cooperation is more than just the dispatching of highly paid experts or the financing of ambitious development projects; it also relies, not least, on the commitment of numerous voluntary workers in non-governmental organizations, town-twinning projects or third world groups, as well as on the untiring efforts of thousands of development workers, for whom it is not financial incentives that are at the forefront, but rather person-to-person contact, the

interest in exchange with other cultures and international solidarity.

Along with the State-run German Development Service, the Federal Government also funds five additional non-governmental development agencies. Together, these agencies employ approximately 1,500 development workers per year, who have undertaken to work as experts for a period of at least two years in a developing country.

The federal Government supports the sending of development workers abroad with an annual contribution of some 160 million deutsche marks. Consultations on the possible deployment of development workers, as well as shorter working and study visits in developing countries, is a service provided by the Working Group on Learning and Helping Overseas, which is an association comprising a total of 26 organizations active in personnel-related development cooperation, voluntary community services and extracurricular youth and educational work.

Furthermore, the Federal Government makes a yearly contribution to the United Nations Volunteers programme to the tune of 3.5 million deutsche marks.

Voluntary social work constitutes the foundation of a democratic society and is the basis of social cohesion and sustained development in society. Volunteers are society's capital. However, volunteer work is, of itself, not a renewable resource. It requires public recognition, it needs fostering and supportive framework conditions. And not least, it requires a State which plays an activating role and which, in its role as legislator, creates the framework conditions that would foster social commitment, eliminate disadvantages, for example in tax law, promote a culture of recognition and seek a relationship based on partnership with citizens committed to doing voluntary service and to their organizations.

In this context we, in our various Governments and administrations, have some catching up to do, and this applies to both national and international organizations. This is why we are sponsoring draft resolution A/56/L.27, containing the "Recommendations on support for volunteering" submitted to the General Assembly at this session. We are hoping that these recommendations will receive wide support and, above all, that they will be subsequently implemented. For, just as our own society thrives on participation and voluntary work, it follows that the more participation and social inclusion are at the foundation of international cooperation and policy, the more volunteer work is promoted in international agencies and structures, as well, and the more the non-governmental organization are taken seriously as partners in all areas of policy, the faster global civil society will be able to overcome exclusion and injustice and the more sustained will be its development.

Today, on 5 December 2001, 1,200 volunteers will be celebrating in Berlin with the Federal Chancellor, Gerhard Schroeder, and the Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, Christine Bergmann, to close the International Year of Volunteers in Germany. The fact that they will be doing this together with so many other volunteers all over the world is an encouraging sign for our future.

My wish for us all is that the impetus given by this commemorative year will continue to carry us along the path towards overcoming poverty and exclusion and towards greater justice and peace in the world.

Mr. Karoui (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): Today Tunisia is sharing with the international community the celebration of the closure of the International Year of Volunteers. In the outcome document of its twenty-fourth special session, on social development, the General Assembly underscored the responsibility borne by Government in establishing global and comprehensive strategies to promote volunteering.

We believe that volunteering plays an important role in safeguarding the stability and cohesion of societies, because it is an expression of solidarity and a genuine will to cooperate within societies and among them. These activities also build trust, pride and a sense of sacrifice and enhance the volunteers' sense of belonging to society.

Volunteer service is an essential element of growth and development in all economic and social areas in developing countries. Civil society and non-governmental organizations in particular participate effectively and responsibly in supporting Governments' efforts in development.

We believe that the volunteer's role has become more urgent with the advent of globalization, because

we must recognize the positive role of volunteers in mitigating the negative effects of globalization and in building a balance in international relations so as to create a world of justice, complementarity and well-being.

Tunisia has opted for an approach to development based on solidarity among all sectors of society according to its cultural values, and we highly prize volunteerism. Voluntary work is not new to Tunisian society. Indeed, this is a value that has been deeply ingrained in our culture and traditions and has been so since old times. Since the changes that have taken place, the State has striven to enhance voluntary work and to promote it into a cultural value within global society.

The creation of a national fund in 1993 to fund and promote volunteer social activities is just one token of the sense of solidarity and volunteering that permeates Tunisian society. These activities include provision of drinking water and electricity, the building of roads, giving access to remote villages, and enhancing access of vulnerable sectors of society to basic health care and other services. This has helped to reduce poverty to 4.2 per cent and to raise the level of education and school enrolment to 99 per cent, and has helped reproductive health services in rural areas.

Based on our conviction of the need for solidarity and complementarity among peoples and States, and on our successful experience in Tunisia with the national solidarity fund, widely known as the 26-26 fund, Tunisia's President has proposed to the international community the creation of a world solidarity fund responsible for collecting voluntary contributions for projects to combat poverty in the least developed countries. This appeal is a response to the resolution of the Millennium Summit calling for halving the number of people living in poverty, on less than $1 a day, by 2015.

The Commission for Social Development has organized many events throughout the International Year of Volunteers in order to build recognition for volunteering and to involve young people, especially in safeguarding the environment. A number of young volunteers have planted trees in vast areas threatened with desertification. Also in the course of the year, a network of associations recognized that there was increased activity in voluntary campaigns benefiting sectors of society with special needs, such as the elderly, orphans, the sick and the injured. A network of Tunisian organizations and associations came together and participated directly in comprehensive Government projects.

In conclusion, I wish to extend my congratulations and thanks to the United Nations Volunteers programme, which has successfully organized the coordination of the activities of the International Year of Volunteers. I would urge everyone to continue their efforts to strengthen voluntary activities and give them the strategic position they deserve, because of their importance in all societies, and in particular developing societies.

Mr. Fonseca (Brazil): I am pleased to join previous speakers in expressing our satisfaction at the outcome of the International Year of Volunteers. The International Year drew the attention of a wider public to the many positive impacts of voluntary action and provided new impetus to it. Its success is a result not only of the dynamic nature of volunteer activity across the world, but also of the galvanizing work done by the United Nations Volunteers programme. I congratulate its Executive Coordinator, Ms. Sharon Capeling-Alakija, and her staff. I am sure that volunteerism is more strongly supported by the international community today.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report. We agree with his assessment that voluntary action, although a powerful tool to fight social exclusion, has been largely overlooked as an instrument to enhance the impact of social policies. We noted with particular interest his observation that volunteering is believed to account for between 8 and 14 per cent of gross domestic product in the world.

In Brazil the decentralization of resources and of decision-making has been possible in the education sector by actively pursuing parental and community involvement and participation in schools. This strategy has allowed for significant gains in the use of existing resources, management efficiency and overall performance, with a positive impact on student enrolment, the quality of education and the allocation of budgetary resources. The widely recognized positive results of the Brazilian HIV/AIDS programme that has helped stabilize the progression of the disease while increasing the well-being of sick people would not have been possible without voluntary action at the community level, with the help of non-governmental

organizations, the media, universities and the private sector and the direct involvement of HIV-positive citizens. Brazil is convinced of the value of building on existing webs of reciprocity, particularly in the areas of education and health.

In his report the Secretary-General reminded us that the Polio Eradication Initiative, spearheaded by United Nations Children's Fund and the World Health Organization, brought infection rates down by 99 per cent with the help of over 10 million volunteers, mostly from local communities. Its manifold positive results clearly indicate that this is an experience to be replicated as the international community struggles to eradicate and control other deadly diseases, such as HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis, and fulfil its people-centred agenda. Brazil shares the view that the United Nations system can only benefit from the increased involvement of volunteers in its activities. As a member of the core group that contributed to the drafting of the resolution presented by Japan and the Netherlands, which we are about to consider, Brazil believes that the time is ripe for the international community to adopt the series of recommendations before us on ways in which Governments and the United Nations system could support volunteering.

Volunteering has always been a feature of Brazilian society. A watershed in volunteerism in my country was the campaign launched in the early 1990s called Citizenship Action against Deprivation and for Life, championed by the sociologist and non-governmental organization leader Herbert de Souza, who was known as Betinho. The positive effects of that campaign helped shed new light on the potential significance of individual and collective voluntary action and its social impact. Drawing on the value of this experience, the Solidarity Community Council established in 1996 its volunteers programme as an important element in the broader effort to provide support and incentives for the organization and strengthening of civil society.

This programme greatly contributed to the expansion of volunteerism in Brazil. Although there are no official estimates, recent research suggests that approximately 25 per cent of the Brazilian population of more than 170 million is engaged in some sort of volunteer work. According to these studies, the number of volunteer organizations in Brazil leaped from some 1,000 to 4,000 between 1988 and 1998. In most cases, these are grass-roots organizations through which civic participation and mutual aid are reinforced, often within communities with very limited financial resources, but with a wealth of imagination and good will. The private sector and non-governmental organizations have also had an increasingly significant role in promoting voluntary action.

Brazil has been engaged in the International Year through a network of 40 centres for the promotion of volunteers. The initiatives organized during the year were coordinated by a national committee composed of representatives of non-governmental organizations, businessmen and businesswomen and representatives of Government and the media, under the leadership of Ms. Ruth Cardoso, President of the Solidarity Community Programme. The activities carried out, such as a series of debates and social events, involved the participation of personalities from all segments of society, including the media, research institutions, representatives of the young, older persons and persons with disabilities, in an effort to promote volunteering in its many forms and to encourage people to engage in it.

The lessons of this successful experience point in the direction of a new pattern of the relationship between State and society, in which the duty of the State and the responsibility of the citizen are complementary dimensions of one identical process of participation and social development.

Mr. Moutari (Niger) (*spoke in French*): The need to help one's neighbour, the selfless spirit of generosity that we call altruism, is as ancient as the world. Starting with the first communal activities to provide mutual assistance right through to multilateral programmes that are now being implemented at the global level, humankind has always sought to improve the imperfect world in which we live. Whether we are talking about the first collective efforts to encourage self-help at the village level, including the first community cooperatives, or individual actions taken by outstanding personalities of world renown, such as Albert Schweitzer and Mahatma Ghandi, among others, it is voluntary service that serves as the basis for the most noble human endeavours.

There is nothing particularly new in the desire to fight to assuage the distress and destitution of others. What is new — and what is one of the characteristics of our century — is this collective determination that we see everywhere to tackle the very causes of poverty. Development is precisely the tool that has been chosen,

and with progress made in international efforts in this area, voluntary service may itself become part of the development endeavour. We are not talking about charity here; we are talking about helping our neighbours to help themselves. That is the point of modern volunteerism, be it in the various United Nations forums or in areas where there is great distress. The nations of the world have proven that they have faith in volunteerism.

At the end of this International Year of Volunteers, 2001, proclaimed by resolution 52/17 of 20 November 1997, I wish to state on behalf of my country that Niger has approached this very important event in the new millennium with an unshakeable faith in the ability of human beings to help each other.

As we all know, volunteers play the crucial role in poverty reduction and peace-building, areas that are current priorities for Niger. This is not just a development objective; it is a key challenge for human rights in the twenty-first century. Poverty eradication proceeds from strengthening human capacity, reinforcing civil society and creating an enabling environment for good governance at the local level through voluntary service.

The Government of the Niger has made the implementation of its poverty reduction strategy a national priority. This strategy offers many opportunities for volunteers to provide high-quality services to help to eradicate poverty. With the special programme of the President of the Republic that started in 2001 and seeks to build 1,000 classrooms, 1,000 health care units and 100 mini-dams annually, the authorities of the Niger rely on national volunteers to provide teachers and health care personnel in schools and health units built within the framework of this programme. Efforts by our authorities, with the support of our development partners — in particular the United Nations Development Programme, through the United Nations Volunteers — are all good signs for the promotion of volunteerism in development, which is participative and decentralized.

In Niger, the entire evolution of the issue of development comes down to a fundamental question: how to reach poor people and see to it that they are able to become masters of their own development and improve their living conditions. It is from this perspective that the role of volunteerism is perceived as a decisive factor for poverty eradication.

After a year of intense activity by volunteers within their organizations, I should now like, on behalf of the Government of the Niger, to thank and congratulate all volunteers and to profoundly thank the National Committee of the International Year of Volunteers in the Niger.

In the light of the very positive outcome with regard to the objectives set for the International Year of Volunteers — that is, recognition, facilitation and the establishment of a network to promote volunteerism — today offers us a good opportunity to say that we hope that the results of the Year will go on beyond 2001. We are convinced that volunteerism is playing, and will continue to play, an important and effective role in sustainable human development, and therefore it needs to be better structured and better supported.

Allow me, since we so very much appreciate volunteers and volunteerism, to solemnly reaffirm our support for draft resolution A/56/L.27, entitled "Recommendations on support for volunteering", introduced by Japan, which has been submitted to the General Assembly. I would like to add Niger's name to the list of sponsors of this resolution.

Long live volunteerism as an effective tool to combat poverty!

Mr. Basnet (Nepal): I am honoured to speak before the Assembly on the agenda item dealing with social development, a subject of paramount importance for us all. I am particularly pleased to be present here today, the Day of Volunteers, which officially closes the International Year of Volunteers launched the same day last year. On this occasion, on behalf of His Majesty's Government of Nepal and on my own behalf, I pay tribute to all volunteers and all promoters of volunteering for their selfless and individualistic contribution to the cause of economic and social development around the world.

Social development has been a high priority item on the international community's agenda for a very long time. The promotion of economic and social advancement of all peoples was at the core of the United Nations Organization when its foundation was laid. We have since witnessed many international initiatives to pursue that objective, including conferences focusing on various aspects of social development.

The World Summit for Social Development, held in 1995 at Copenhagen, was a milestone in this process, when we committed ourselves to creating an environment conducive to achieving social development goals. Eradicating poverty, promoting productive employment and enhancing social integration were among the areas of core commitments.

In June last year, when we assembled in Geneva to review and assess the implementation of the commitments made at Copenhagen, we reaffirmed our earlier commitments and also agreed to complement our political will with mobilization and allocation of additional resources.

These and other international conferences, especially those of the 1990s, have been extremely instrumental in creating a greater awareness in the field of social development. A growing realization that economic development should be integrated with social and cultural aspects, which determine the advancement of societies, is now in place. The level of social progress that we see today has greatly benefited from the high priority accorded to social development in our national policies as well as on the international agenda. A great chunk of credit for any achievement we have made so far goes to the international volunteers, including, in particular, the United Nations Volunteers.

As is obvious, however, much remains to be done before we can truly call it a success story. The situation of millions of people in developing countries, particularly the least developed ones among them, remains gloomy. Inequality within and among countries continues to grow. Abject poverty and endemic deprivation reflect the stark reality of the present world. Social injustice, exclusion and marginalization have further increased. My delegation strongly believes that such an unacceptable situation should not be allowed to continue.

A holistic approach is required to solve all these social problems, including those relating to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family, as all these are intricately related to the bigger social system.

We in Nepal have always accorded a high priority to the development of the social sector. Convinced that pervasive poverty is the biggest and most formidable enemy in our way, we have adopted poverty eradication as the sole objective of our five-year development plan that is under way, and beyond, with a view to eradicating absolute poverty within the next 20 years. We have directed over seven tenths of development resources to the rural sector and accorded high priority to the enhancement of people's participation in resource mobilization, the implementation of development activities and balanced and equitable distribution of the outcomes of development to local levels. The results have been encouraging and the role of volunteering has been crucial in all aspects of the process.

In addition to a host of problems that we are facing in our pursuit of development, terrorism, international and domestic, has emerged as an alarming threat to humanity and a major challenge to social development. We feel that there is no possibility of furthering social development, particularly in poor countries where resources are extremely limited, unless this new challenge is effectively addressed. We believe that a coordinated international effort is a must to solve this problem.

At present, my own country, Nepal, is facing the threat of domestic terrorism. While we are actively committed to and engaged in uplifting the socio-economic status of the people and institutionalizing multiparty democracy, a group of terrorists, the so-called Maoists, are launching an armed struggle in order to destroy our democratic norms and values. They are engaged in such activities as killing innocent people, extorting money from the people and terrorizing them, looting the financial institutions, launching armed attacks on security forces and development structures, blocking the process of development activities in rural areas and creating an intolerable state of terror. Compelled by the so-called Maoists' abrupt and unilateral withdrawal from peace talks and their resumption of terrorizing armed attacks on the institution of national pride, the Royal Nepalese Army, His Majesty's Government of Nepal, consistent with its commitment to fighting terrorism in all its manifestations and at all levels, has declared a state of emergency in the country, in accordance with the 1990 Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal. In this context, we express our sincere thanks to the international community for supporting us in our efforts to contain terrorism at the national level. The Government is determined to end the chaotic situation in Nepal and to bring the terrorists to justice as soon as possible.

There is no doubt that the International Year of Volunteers has created an extensive awareness that there is an important link between volunteering and

economic and social development and that volunteering can play a significant role in a number of activities, including the peace-building efforts of the United Nations. We commend the United Nations Development Programme for launching the United Nations Volunteers programme in over 130 countries of the world and the United Nations Volunteers for coordinating activities to bring to the fore all aspects relating to volunteering. We commend the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report, which captures the essence of all problems and prospects associated with volunteering and suggests measures to be taken at different levels.

The tradition of volunteering is at the core of my country's values and I am proud to note that it has been prompted to new heights by the international drive to promote volunteering. Nepal remains an eager and dedicated actor to make the Year of Volunteers and success. While we acknowledge the contributions of international volunteers, complementing our own in our modern nation-building efforts since 1974, we are pleased to be a net supplier of expertise in the sense that we are one of the top five suppliers of volunteers and second among the developing countries. Over 1,200 Nepalese have so far worked as volunteers abroad under the United Nations flag for various programmes and missions around the world.

To conclude, the official Year of Volunteers has come to a close, but it has been a big eye-opener as to how people from anywhere, with their free will, skill and dedication, can contribute to building strong and healthy societies around the world. The Year represents a successful beginning in that sense and, as a co-sponsor of the draft resolution on volunteering to be adopted later this afternoon, Nepal is ready to do its part in promoting volunteering as a cost-effective gift of modern times and, as always, to further the cause of development.

Ms. Grobbelaar (South Africa): In South Africa, volunteerism has a long history. It was through the spirit of volunteerism that South Africa achieved its democracy and in the spirit of what we call ubuntu that we have turned volunteerism into an instrument of action. South African citizens from across the country, from the public and private sectors, are encouraged to join the movement of volunteers.

Not long ago, members of the South African emergency rescue team volunteered their services in assisting authorities in India to deal with a massive earthquake. Similarly, another team of volunteers joined in rescue efforts following the Turkish earthquake. South African volunteers have assisted with natural disasters in our subregion, including floods in Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

The Secretary-General's report places volunteerism at the centre of any strategy aimed at poverty reduction, sustainable development and social integration. In this regard, the South African Government, in August this year, unveiled a programme of action of volunteers to combat poverty and HIV/AIDS and to address a number of key social challenges. The programme of action is a joint initiative between the department of social development, Volunteer South Africa, United Nations Volunteers, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), civil society, as well as other volunteer movements, to act against poverty and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. It is part of an attempt to improve the quality of life of all South Africans, and it is also part of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) which aims at reviving and regenerating Africa.

Last year, Volunteer South Africa 2001 was established to coordinate the celebration of our national year of volunteers in South Africa. A committee was elected to take the process forward. Volunteer South Africa is registered as a non-governmental organization with the directorate for non-profit organizations, thus complying with all the requirements of registration. Volunteer South Africa 2001 consists of national structures representing all sectors of Government, and includes non-governmental and community-based organizations, labour unions, the public and private sectors, the media and the United Nations Development Programme.

In order to promote the letter and spirit of the draft resolution on recommendations on support for volunteering (A/56/L.27) before us today for adoption, South Africa is not only one of the sponsors of the resolution, but our authorities are also in the process of studying current legislation, with special reference to labour laws, in order to determine how it impacts on volunteering. In addition, Government policies, with special reference to education, health, welfare, safety and security, environment and sport, are being drafted in an effort to see where these policies ignore the potential for volunteer service. A public survey on

perceptions and attitudes on volunteering in all sectors of society is also being undertaken, as well as an assessment of the economic value of volunteering. The result will therefore be a comprehensive set of recommendations, which will ensure a volunteer-friendly legislative and policy framework for South Africa.

Before the end of this month, the South African public will participate in a mass concert at the Union Buildings in Pretoria, which is our seat of Government, to celebrate volunteering, usher in the festive season and recognize the important contribution of faith-based volunteering, focusing on all faiths represented in South Africa.

In March 2002, South Africa will join with other Southern African Development Community (SADC) members to launch a volunteer vision regional conference, aimed at exploring, sharing, networking and inspiring one another in volunteering as part of the African renaissance.

For South Africa, the guiding principle is that communities have the capacity to control their own lives. Their efforts must be increased and supported. This principle supports the belief that the needy are the experts with regard to their own situation, and therefore have a definite role to play in addressing their needs or changing their own situation.

Our vision is to develop a society in which the right of all citizens to engage in voluntary or community action is recognized and valued as an essential part of democracy. It is also crucial to develop a society in which citizens choose to exercise that right because they want to be active participants in helping others. Society's involvement is viewed as an important element, because it has a great potential for promoting the spirit of volunteerism.

As we have stated before, volunteerism is no stranger to South African people.

The meeting rose at noon.